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THE TENDER REALIST

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THE TENDER REALIST

AND OTHER ESSAYS

BY

L. WARDLAW MILES

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To K. S. M.

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THE TENDER REALIST

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THE TENDER REALIST

> But a fundamental antagonism of the two, (science and religion), it becomes evident, is not to be thought of; it is unthinkable, even absurd. If at some period in the course of civilization we seriously find that our science and our religion are antagonistic, then there must be something wrong either with our science or with our religion. Perhaps not seldom there may be something wrong with both.
>
> HAVELOCK ELLIS.

> Strenge getrūwode
> mund-gripe mägenes. Swa sceal man dōn, ðonne hē
> ät guðe gegān ðenceð longsumme lof, nā ymb his līf
> cearað.
>
> BEOWULF.

The worth of a generalization depends on the thing upon which it is made and on the person who makes it. To begin with such a generalization upon generalizations forms a fitting introduction to the following pages which are perhaps unwarrantedly filled with them. But whether or not this is a fair criticism may be disregarded now; what I want to emphasize now at the start is the nature of the things upon which the generalizations are made.

The things here discussed are obviously usual things. Everybody has known some of them; nearly everybody has known, at second, if not first, hand all of them. Everybody has experienced sleep, and

though some may have escaped a personal experience of patronage, they have at least heard of it or watched its effect on others. Glory, it may be granted, is not in one sense usual, but in another it is; we have all read of it. Perhaps a few people may be found who are entirely unacquainted with sentimentality, or sophistication, or loneliness, but it would seem doubtful. Now the advantages of employing usual things upon which to generalize are perhaps less often noted than the disadvantages. The latter, the disadvantages, are that all the good remarks have generally been already made. It is easier to say a good thing, or at least a new thing, on a new subject like monkey glands, or Dowieism than on older ones like life or death, at which everybody has taken a shot. On the other hand the advantage of the usual subject is that it remains a subject, while the unusual subject is apt to turn into nothing and vanish carrying its generalizations with it.

The name of the anonymous epigrammatist who first said "Life is short," has been unfortunately forgotten, but the phrase still stands as his cenotaph, and always will stand, an enduring monument to the Unknown Soldier who fell in the early wars of generalization. For of course he was killed as soon as he had spoken; of course those serving in the great opposing army of the cautious and prosaic, unwilling to hear any statement not immediately obvious, killed him as a reckless and unverified rhetorician. They were probably too stupid to see how their actions at once proved the truth of his words. Like their

successors today they were probably proud of themselves and scornful of their victim. And now—where are they?

"And they that mocked him, lo, they too are dead!"

I want to begin then with the claim that whatever may be said of their treatment here, my subjects themselves are universal and excellent. One more disadvantage, however, which obtains in such broad and usual subjects must be noted once for all. Generalizations made about such universal matters unfortunately admit of many and exasperating exceptions. Restrict your field of observation sufficiently and you may escape error. Say: "Such and such a group writing in Paris today are all silly asses," and you may be 100% right, but say: "Life is a good thing," or "Death a bad one," and you dangerously expose your flank to the dogged infantry of the literal and cautious. Because this is so, because the following pages deal often with broad assertions which are not always intended as absolute, it is begged that the necessary qualification may be supplied by the reader when the writer might in fairness be supposed to intend it. Somewhat as the author who printed a page of all kinds of punctuation marks at the beginning of his book, and begged each reader to employ according to taste in the unpointed pages which followed, so now the salt-cellar of at least a moderate commonsense is herewith proffered, and the reader begged to season all obviously unwarranted assertions with some degree of probability, using the phrases "In one

sense," "To a certain degree," "For the most part," etc., etc., when required.

In regard to the author of the present generalizations so much cannot be said as for the subjects, which, it is claimed, are significant no less than usual. He has no particular claim to authority; which today proceeds from two great sources. The two authoritative voices of today are Religion and Science. Literature, good or bad, is not in this sense authority, but the expression of individual opinion. To assume authority a speaker must claim the right to speak as a churchman or as a scientist; and in the present case the author has no right to speak as either. He lacks the orthodox belief necessary for the first, no less than the knowledge, training, and complete sympathy necessary for the second. He dares to think that he appreciates much of the worth and shares something of the benefit of both, yet it would be dishonest to assert that he belongs entirely to either. He is an outsider, though an outsider who would never voluntarily have chosen that situation.

This is a very strange thing, to live thus outside the two great camps of present human authority; to continue to stand before an impasse; to remain ludicrously impaled on the horns of a dilemma; to have one's heart and one's head in different places. Men have in the past been dismembered, but it killed them before they could realize the experience. The odd thing which I am crudely attempting to put in metaphor, is dismemberment—spiritual dismemberment —without loss of consciousness. For some natures

the experience is very painful, though not by any means for all. Nothing is more usual than the type which keeps its heart at the altar while its head continues to function comfortably in laboratory or business office several miles away, and which naïvely wonders why this should seem unnatural to anyone. Another class of sturdy antinomians and individualists best thrives and blossoms in such bleak and sunless cosmic weather. But if one happens to possess a realistic outlook and a naturally tender heart, if one is by nature better described as concentric and centripetal rather than eccentric and centrifugal, if one is loyal and social rather than individual and antisocial, if one can patiently and passionately serve a cause greater than oneself, but not finding it can only serve the cause of self with at best fitful and hampered energies—then to be condemned to live as such a lonely Ishmaelite is not only strange, it is also sometimes tragic.

The story is told of how at the battle of Culloden the Keppoch Macdonalds—the great clan Colla—having by mistake been removed from their place of honor at the right wing of the line of battle, felt this affront to their pride so deeply that they refused to charge with the rest of the Highlanders, who that day rushed forward to defeat and death in the name of the last of the Stuarts and the last save one of history's great romantic causes. But the same terrible pride which would not allow them to advance would as

little allow them to retreat. "Smarting and sullen at the affront which they conceived to have been put upon their name, they bore the fire of the English regiments without flinching, and gave way to their rage by hewing at the heather with their swords."

"Has it come to this," cried their Chief, "that the children of my tribe have forsaken me!" and "rushing forward alone, sword in hand," he met kind death. For to such a man in such circumstance death was kind. But to those whom he left behind him, death and life alike were not kind but bitter, bitter with all sense of frustration and unavailing sacrifice. Well, though it was doubt not pride that held them fixed, that story serves to picture in a way the plight of some whom the waning authority of an orthodox faith, with no compensating substitution of the authority of science, once left exposed as it were on a battle-field where they could neither advance nor retreat.

Just seventy years ago Darwin published his *Origin of Species*. Just sixty years ago Huxley coined the word Agnostic. What changes in men's thought in that little length of time! The general facts are familiar to everyone though everyone sees them differently according to his point of view. As I, and as many more competent to judge than myself, see it the battle between the two great hosts of authority has so far resulted in dispossessing the old supernaturalism from its strongest positions in such a way

that their reoccupation is impossible. Yet what is a more recent and no less impressive result is to be seen in the advancing ranks of science, where other positions which were earlier victoriously taken, and once taken claimed as impregnable, have been again relinquished. Only expert tacticians dare decide just how such a conflict is going—and they often differ violently—but it may be safe to say that many who have most knowledge of the facts, as well as many of us numerous and interested observers who have far less, agree that the voices of both authorities have markedly changed in this eventful half century. Fifty years ago young people could still be made wretched over not believing in Noah's Ark and Jonah. Today many find it less dangerous to doubt Christ's Divinity or a future life. Fifty years ago Haeckel and others representing scientific authority, or at least claiming to represent it, dogmatically announced a mechanized universe. Today Eddington utterly disclaims it.

" . . . B—'s end was very calm and beautiful. Just such as his friends would have chosen for him, or the old man desired for himself. He had, as you know, been ailing for some weeks, but nothing apparently serious. . . . On Friday afternoon he asked me to hand him Leslie Stephen's *Agnostic's Apology*, an old favorite, you remember, with him. After reading a little of the essay where Stephen describes his pretended facing death in the Alps, he shut it and said with characteristic assurance and humor, 'young people today prefer a cosmos of flux but the old-

fashioned immutable laws are good enough for me.' Then he shut his eyes and I heard him murmur softly to himself, 'indestructibility of matter'—'moonshine of idealism'—'physical basis of life.' He gave a gentle sigh. Then all was over. On his lips still rested the happy smile of one who knows what he knows and what he cannot know. . . . "

Talk of "the faith of a little child." Those old-fashioned nineteenth century agnostics had it. The universe was their new mechanical toy, and they would look at no other. Between neo-Catholicism and the more recent metaphysics of science they would have fought like the martyrs between gladiators and wild beasts. The simple unbelief learned at their Alma Mater's knee sufficed for them. Certainly the death described might challenge comparison with Addison's "See how a Christian can die," and, though entirely supposititious, I think it might be true enough, and so well illustrate how in its short span of less than one century, modern science has exhibited changes no less profound than those of traditional Christianity in some twenty times as long a period.

The attitude represented in these pages reflects what is a very usual thing today, but was unusual a short time ago. For lack of a better phrase I call it Tender Realism. Perhaps Tough Idealism might make as good a description, but amateur metaphysicians are not over nice in such matters of definition (or in much else I fear) and in any case the adjective

of an oxymoron carries more emphasis than its noun. Thus the novel, *The Hardboiled Virgin*, represented I believe (I never read it) greater interest in hard-boiledness than in virginity. I might take a hint from Mr. Shaw's *Unsocial Socialist* or Mrs. Gerould's *Unsocial Christian* and say Gregarious Antinomianism, or perhaps Scar Tissue of Romance would do as well —or badly. Called what you will the phenomenon is a sort of inevitable realism which however fixed in some respects begins to show profound modifications in others. And it marks a widely reaching and most significant change in thought.

Of course I know this is no discovery of my own. Even a superficial acquaintance with popular authors of the day recalls many—Shaw, Lowes Dickinson, Havelock Ellis, Santayana, Durant, Lippmann, and others—who represent what I mean. Yet it is striking to remember how only yesterday one name, William James, stood almost uniquely in this position. All of these mentioned like still others have gone beyond the earlier agnosticism. Differing widely among themselves they are all alike in that each of them has accepted science and yet not refused the validity of religion. Each has effected a new synthesis of his own. If this seems at first sight nothing new one need only remember the old attempts at "reconciling science and religion" which were popular twenty-five years ago.

Naturally the fundamentalists of religion and science disapprove. The former know they have the only truth, and want to make everyone else share its

possession; the latter know they have the only truth and are indifferent to outsiders incapable of receiving it. Both are alike in a scorn for this democratization of truth and popular confiscation of authority, a scorn which, it must be confessed, carries something noble with it. Yet I believe it is as ineffectual as the scorn of Marie Antoinette and Louis XVI. The only thing that can be effectual is a new synthesis, or, what is more shocking to the old royalists, new syntheses.

And, incidentally, since there is proceeding today, lauded in some quarters and derided in others, this great popularization of philosophy, affecting the man in the street, and even threatening to affect the boy in the college, the present author feels somewhat less shamefaced in presenting the kind of thing which is sometimes contemptuously labeled "armchair psychology." Real psychology, of course, is to be had from those hieratic occupants of laboratory stools who speak with real authority, and the term "armchair" implies that observation and generalization made elsewhere are as dangerous as liquor from an unknown bootlegger. I admit that the sort of stuff here furnished is not "psychology" in the accepted sense of the word, but at the same time I submit one fact which I claim does not violate the universal laws of inductive science, and if it violates those of Behaviorism so much the worse for that school, namely: that for a place from which to make human generalizations—and scientists or laymen, we must all make them—an armchair whether placed in a club window, or at a library desk, or by a fireside, sometimes shows

advantages over a laboratory stool. Though the armchair is an easier place in which to doze or talk banalities, it also sometimes, if the occupant can keep eyes open and mouth shut, commands a wider field of men's activities and a deeper view into their hearts. This is heresy. It is spoken with full recognition of the severe penalty which science reserves for heretics —not fagots and the burning interest once displayed by the church, but something scarcely less cruel: abysmally contemptuous disregard. The ways of the heretic continue hard. Which is worse, to burn at the stake and be done with it, or to go shivering all one's life in the chilly outside air, without direction or distinction, like Peer Gynt or Tomlinson when

> "He yearned to the flare of Hell-gate there as the light of his own hearthstone"?

It happens that "Beyond Agnosticism" is just the title of a volume by that very eloquent and moving speaker, Father Iddings Bell. But, as some of us see it, such a thinker does not go beyond the position in question: rather he is only one of those who have approached it and then receded to previously held ground. Chief among these is another, to whom I here gladly pay my recognition of admiration and gratitude. I only wish I could pay my debt as well, but it is so big I cannot. Mr. Chesterton is to be thanked for so many good things that the recipient does not know where to begin: for showing how piety and high spirits are no less compatible than high spirits and jazz; how subtlety can grow with reverence

for simple things, and fun with worship of holy ones; how Oscar Wilde could, unintentionally, be funnier than his epigrams; how a keen sense of humor and a keen sense of honor are both precious, but the latter more precious. All that and so much, much more—and yet he has also shown us how all this is compatible with the belief that primitive folk-lore constitutes good science. What a really killing article he might have contributed on Galileo had the "London Illustrated" been running three centuries ago!

For instance Mr. Chesterton mocks that supposed fallacy of the moderns who wish to keep a phrase and at the same time change the meaning which the phrase expresses; who, as he puts it, keep the phrase the Holy Ghost but want to use it to express the meaning of the League of Nations. To me it seems perfectly obvious that the exact meaning of any phrase has always been changing and always will change. Why? Because such meaning is, in part at least, always conditioned by the scientific beliefs of the period in which its user lives. The scientific beliefs, that is the generalizations made from observation of physical facts, of the author of the Book of Genesis were not those of later readers, using the same phrases. Mr. Chesterton says: "Restatement means putting an old notion in new terms. But they (the moderns) mean that they want to put a new notion in old terms." Now how would this apply to Genesis? Certainly the old terms are with us still. Everyone recognizes *Beginning*, *God*, *Creation*, *Heaven* and *Earth*. But how can anyone claim that the notions

which any, or all, of these terms represent are identical in any reader of today and the writer of that far off time? Take the term *Earth*. To Mr. Chesterton as to all of us the word Earth represents, in part at least, a big round ball, lit on one side and dark on the other, spinning through emptiness around the sun. Needless to say that to his brilliant and poetic mind it represents many other things too, but in part at least it represents that, and for the reason that that is a part of the scientific belief of the period in which he, however regretfully, must live. But to the author of Genesis the term did not convey that big ball notion at all. Whatever it represented it wasn't that. Mr. Chesterton ought then to deny our right to call this single spinning planet of a single solar system by the old term. "Your notion is a new one," he ought to say. "Don't use an old term which was made to express another notion." Now what applies to the term Earth applies also I think to the term God, and in the other passage to the term Holy Ghost. In part at least these, like all terms, are inevitably affected by the popular science of the period in which they are used. While I believe in the League of Nations I am not prepared to identify it with the Holy Ghost. Should it, however, in time free the world from the wrongs it is intended to redress, I shall I confess be inclined to feel it possesses something of the other.

In such a case as we have been considering it is Mr. Chesterton who deserves whatever reproach belongs to the epithet scientist. For he wants to continue to hold unchanged an old scientific notion of a

geocentric universe (though I don't think he really can) and is unwilling to hear the term earth which implied it applied to new scientific ideas. Toward such ideas he is an agnostic, one of those good old-fashioned ones of the Mosaic period.

The real crux of the matter lies in the fact that by notions he means the things about which men hold notions, and by notions I mean what men think about things. If I could get under Mr. Chesterton's skin, not in an irritating but in a sympathetic sense, and look out through his eyes at my universe I know I should see a dismal prospect waste and wild (or would he call it tame?), an absurdly flaccid and fluctuating twilight landscape without form and void. In turn his (and that of his brothers in science, the Protestant Fundamentalists) looks to me in the last analysis chockablock, mechanical, and too glaringly lighted. But "in the last analysis" only, and few, even the most brilliant and sympathetic, live most of the time in that circumscribed locality. And elsewhere the world of the author of Orthodoxy contains for me that high adventure and genial charm, that heroism and gentleness, that subtlety of brain and simplicity of heart which I have known in other representatives of traditional Catholicism as well.

In a familiar passage Emerson describes how often in the works of others "we recognize our own rejected thoughts;" and "they come back to us with a certain alienated majesty." It has been with something of

this sense that some of those living through a period when they could make their home in neither church nor science, and forced by circumstance into an independence which they would not have naturally claimed, came, after feeling apologetic for their position, to find it shared by many others, and perceived it needed no apology. In extenuation for the slowness with which they made such discovery it might be urged that particular natures are beset with particular difficulties, such as a natural respect (or, if you will, timidity) toward authority; or the unwillingness of giving pain to those whose love but not whose faith they share; or the unwillingness to disturb beliefs which though not proper for themselves, may still be proper for others. However, whether they won such independence early or late, boldly or with hesitation, it was often with an indescribable sense of surprise that such a tender realist came out of his wilderness to meet a crowd of like Ishmaelists, and to go on farther into a new land. I think it was Clough who complained that Carlyle had led him and his like into the wilderness—and left them there. Whatever may be said in praise or disparagement of our new land it is an unspeakable improvement on being lost in a desert, on such despair and frustration as belonged to the other, and as attended the dying clansmen in their impasse at Culloden.

"Anfangs hab' ich fast verzagen,
Und ich glaubt' ich träg' es nie,
Und ich hab' es doch getragen,
Aber frag' mir nur nicht wie"

That expresses the matter, and yet when quoted suggests a reminiscent self-pity and sentimentality which is not really mine. Mr. Chesterton's own spirited lines which preface *The Man Who Was Thursday* tell part of the story—but not the part experienced by those of us who went on through No Man's Land instead of turning back again. Perhaps the best thing is simply to quote the answer of the man who was asked what he had done in that other cataclysmic period of history, which, though its manifestations were more obvious, was perhaps not more revolutionary than our own, and who merely replied: "J'ai vêcu!"

However illogical or unjustified the process may appear to unsympathetic observers, the survivors of our revolution of thought have gone on living and sometimes achieved a considerable amount of satisfaction from it. And, however unimportant and undeserving of record their history may look to some, it is vitally significant for themselves. For the matter is not closed when to our humble "il faut vivre," the observer answers, "je ne vois pas la nécessité." (Wit has always been the compensation of the cruel reactionary.) We even claim the further right to record our position, that position to which we believe the whole world is coming, provided only we can do it with good temper and with simple seriousness.

The good temper is not so hard, but the simplicity of the seriousness is another matter. This question of simplicity, except for the very gifted and the very dull, is apt to be a complicated one. The first minter

of that glittering generality, "Life's a complicated business," deserves his monument no less than he who first generalized upon its brevity. (Perhaps it was the same generalizer. Perhaps his death paid the penalty of repeated offenses of this nature.) It is hard to put complex matters, that is to say strange matters, that is to say usual matters, simply, whatever simple folk may think. If such ask why ideas which are oftenest seriously intended—as they are—should be offered in a form which may appear to many both affected and flippant, I can only plead that extenuation.

All of which partakes of that most futile and most tiresome of human expressions—apology. Enough to say that the writer is one who having watched for a considerable period the usual things of life—tragic, pleasurable, and commonplace—deaths of old friends—changes of public opinion—old terms, new notions and all the rest—has acquired a courage, or at least a recklessness, which emboldens him to say somewhat of what he feels about them. The cosmos has given him a mind, or what he claims to be such, and, perhaps unreasonably but certainly instinctively, he now feels a desire to reciprocate, and in turn to give the cosmos a piece of his mind, that is to say to dare to generalize upon it, to pass individual judgment, and so be able to say, unlike the Psalmist: liberavi animam meam. If to do this proves a foolish thing without significance, he is content to put the blame where it really belongs, that is on the cosmos that made him, for he did not make himself. If, on

the other hand, it is not utterly foolish, if it is of some however small significance—then in similar fashion, he gladly speaks in the words of an older and more sympathetic tradition: "It is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves."

That last generalization is of the kind which to some sounds too absurdly obvious to be worth the making, and to others too absurdly unwarranted. Nothing better illustrates the nature of the tender realist, that nature which many of the most conflicting opinions agree in finding so indefinite and unsatisfactory, than that he, grown independent of others' opinions, at least finds such a generalization suggestive and significant for himself.

SENTIMENTALITY

SENTIMENTALITY

Few are both true and tender, and he grew
In time a little tenderer than true.

ALICE DUER MILLER.

To choose a good caption and the proper descriptive title is half the battle of such a discussion as here intended. It may look easy, but here it is really most difficult. The above caption does well enough, though it might be better to use the words of the Frenchman in the Alps, quoted in Samuel Butler's Note Books: "Madame, aimez vous les beautés de la nature? Pour moi je les déteste!" But the title—that is another matter and a more difficult one. And the reason for its difficulty lies in the fact that the subject itself is so hard to isolate and define.

Though sentimentality has been discussed at length, yet somehow the treatment is always either too obvious or too vague really to help us get at the matter. Everybody knows the usual implications of the word: it is the enjoyment of emotion merely for its own sake—feeling not sufficiently connected with fact; sometimes fact is lacking as a cause for the emotion; sometimes there is not sufficient fact as the emotion's result. Definition is a pleasant game, easily played by those, with even a moderate command of words, who are too lazy to open the dictionary lying before them. At times, however, curiosity gets the better of laziness. So indeed it

happens with myself at this moment, and I find the Century Dictionary approves, or at least does not contradict the above definition, for it reads: "Tendency to be swayed by sentiment; affected sensibility or sentiment; mawkish susceptibility," and then goes on to talk of Rousseau.

Or if you prefer example to definition, everybody recognizes the sentimentalist as the man who chokes when the poor old mother is turned away by her successful son in that gripping scene of the last act, and who ten minutes later snubs real poverty on the pavement outside the theatre.

So far so good, but frankly have we really gone at all far? For—and here I am giving away at once whatever small claim to originality the present inquiry possesses—how do such definition and example help matters unless they go still further? What we really want are answers to those pertinent and important questions: Just what *is* sufficient relation to fact? When *should* we be swayed by sentiment? Or should we never be so swayed? Would the sentimental exemplar cited be a better man never to have choked at all? What, in the last ditch of analysis, is affectation and what naturalness? Where does sentiment, which most if not all regard as legitimate, end, and where does sentimentality, which even those who enjoy affect to despise, begin?

The old advice to young lawyers: When in doubt abuse the opposing counsel, might be paralleled for

modern criticism: When hesitating over your next subject-head patronize the Victorians. I happen to admire that abused race far too deeply to offer any real indignity, but in this instance let me follow the advice cited (particularly as I do not consider any attack of my own capable of doing the said Victorians any great amount of damage).

Ah those lachrymose individuals! Did the world since Noah ever witness such a wet season as theirs, unless indeed it was that of the Georgians a little earlier? But in the case of the latter there is at least this difference, that while Sterne and his confreres in *sensibilité* often wept quite as copiously and as mawkishly, when they laughed it was usually with a coarseness and even ferocity (witness Heine) which the kindlier Dickens and his companions did not imitate. The laughter of those long, dark ages (1837–1901) was frequently very close to tears. Indeed of this they boasted. Of the Victorian muse one might say in the words of her most melodious singer:

> "Laughter soft as tears, and tears that turned to laughter,
> These were things she sought for years and sorrowed after."

But had they known how cruelly their sentimental laughter—no less than their sentimental weeping—was to hurt the delicate ears of certain young people in literature today, then I think they would, even at the expense of great effort, have tried to curb it—for whatever their faults, they were not an inherently cruel race.

Hear the splashing of their Tears, Idle Tears! If the word *idle* is used in the sense of unemployed it is a most faulty description. Though Ductless Glands had not come into fashion, the lachrymal variety was working overtime. Yet in another sense those tears were perhaps after all not altogether idle—that is they were not altogether useless; they served a real purpose.

The Victorian era was not, I believe, the Dark Ages of literature, but it did possess something of a vague and pensive quality which might suggest the sobriquet of the Twilight Ages. A twilight of gentle and tender nostalgia with a very heavy precipitation of sentimental dew, sometimes even a thick Scotch mist of it. The day is done and the darkness falls from the wing of night, with a highly improper simile of an eagle's feather and flight. Longfellow and many others of that by-gone age were particularly strong on tenderness, tears, and twilight. For that reason they achieved as much popularity then as they achieve oblivion now.

Well, absurd as it may sound, perhaps *we* should be better off for a little of what Mrs. Browning absurdly called the "dropping of warm human tears." A great many men of a great many varieties and periods have found a solace in tears such as would seem to prove them not altogether idle after all. Scoff if you please, but it may be that we, in our glaring noon of realism and practical efficiency, might with advantage do what many men—Achilles for Patroclus and the bloodthirsty Jeffrey for Little Nell—did before us.

Milton makes Satan weep in Hell, and there is little that is Victorian in that character. Mr. Chesterton's views on such aspects of sentimentality (or is it sentiment?) are tellingly presented. Read what he says of the dying Nelson's "Kiss me, Hardy," and admit that if we have lost much folly with the sunset of romantic ideals, we have gained much feebleness as well. Here as in other matters we often seem to have discarded absurdity to replace it with repressions, phobias, and such unpleasant substitutes. The deserved popularity of Miss Reese's fine sonnet, "Tears," bears interesting testimony that we do not always forget the older appeal, nor find that a return means absurdity.

One's own judgment may indeed conflict with his immediate personal reaction toward this phenomenon of weeping. Actually to be obliged to watch a man subjected to such heaving and snorting is indecent—however interesting. A woman, of course, can do it in a more civilized fashion, but even that phenomenon proves for most men an embarrassing spectacle. Personally I detest the sight of strapping college boys led with streaming faces from the football field. It ought to be Homeric perhaps, but—especially when the thing grows ritualized—it seems to me (I know I am illogical) silly. But this is merely my immediate reaction. My deliberate judgment suggests that tears may supply a healthy outlet whereby to ease the stuffed bosom of that perilous stuff which weighs on some men's hearts. Tears

> "Give sorrow words. The grief that does not speak
> Whispers the o'er-fraught heart and bids it—"

if not "break," at any rate distend in varying degrees of discomfort. Such at any rate is the Shakespearean psychology of tears, and I believe it provides a sound and practical answer to Tennyson's "I know not what they mean."

But we are talking as though all sentimentalism were nothing but tears and twilight. The man who invented the word should remind us that it can be mingled with wit and modishness as well. To think a little sophistication need destroy this thing would be to know little of the company in which it may travel.

Ship ahoy! See, a gallant square-rigged craft is bearing down upon us, her silken sails bellying proudly in summer sunshine before the sachet-scented breezes, and her prow, with its great gilded baroque Aphrodite, cleaving the gently swelling summer seas. The good ship Rococo! As she draws nearer we mark the brave crew that crowd her decks and shrouds, and wave hands and handkerchiefs: ladies in patches and paniers and gentlemen in shorts and silks. Now we can even distinguish familiar faces.

That tall figure in clerical black at the wheel is the Captain himself! He is surrounded by pretty women, with whom he is talking with great animation. None other than the Reverend Laurence Sterne. See, for a moment he pauses to spit blood over the ship's side, and the next instant imperturbably resumes his interminable, deplorable, delightful, sentimental talk to his select and delighted audience. . . . I want to

get aboard. I try to signal them to heave to. Hopeless! On she sails, and I am left here feeling very dull and homesick. . . .

I was observing that sentimentality can be united with wit and modishness no less than with tears and twilight. Witness Oscar Wilde whom Mr. Shaw early detected as an arrant sentimentalist. The epigrams of Wilde's dramas are first-water diamonds scattered like dew-drops among the petals of an overblown rose of sensibility. Like many rococo things they manage to combine bad taste with a charm of their own.

It was that severe scholar the late Mr. Churton Collins who brought a very serious charge against a number of Shakespeare's characters, upsetting previous opinions in a most disturbing manner. The noble Brutus, for instance, was shown not very noble after all. For Brutus, told of Portia's death and pretending he does not already know it, displays (according to Mr. Collins) a very reprehensible desire to play with his own emotions, and to affect a feeling which is not genuine. And as for Hamlet—he was proved the most despicable of such fellows, a very Jean Jacques for posturing in his own and others' eyes. Then later came Mr. Frank Harris with similar ideas, but pushed now to include not only the characters but their author himself, who was, if we believe this biographer, not only the greatest of poets, but the greatest of snobs, neurotics, and sentimentalists as well.

To look back on the closing years of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries is to watch a very massacre of innocents: a holocaust of the devotees of crepuscular tears and tenderness at the hands of the ruthless satirists and realists. Ibsen heaved his half-brick into the dome of many-colored glass which covered the theatre and stained it with the tender hues of romanticism (I am attempting to affect an appropriate style of description), and let in the light of common day. There was a sound of crashing glass and screams of panic from the audience. Meredith, Butler, Mark Twain, and Hardy—these, I suppose, were the greatest captains of the invading hosts, but there were many others. It was hardly safe for a native Victorian to enter a library or pass a bookstall lest he be stilettoed by Mr. Shaw or bludgeoned by Mr. Mencken. "The Old South died of reading Walter Scott," declared Mark Twain, and a new age proceeded—and often still proceeds—to kick its corpse.

In the period described and later, there lived—and continues to live—a species of harmless, disillusioned romantic who spent his time dodging things thrown at him, and was forced to exist uncomfortably enough between two eras to neither of which he entirely belonged. He was somewhat like a small boy dressed against his will in a Little Lord Fauntleroy suit. At home he despised but submitted to this absurd vestigial remnant of the romantic wardrobe. On the street, however, assailed by the ribald mockery of little ragamuffins, he fought desperately to defend

its dignity. And thus fighting, he sometimes obtained victory, and made the astonishing discovery that he was not altogether contemptible and harmless after all.

And really when I think of how Mr. Harris has defended his hypothetical sentimentalist Shakespeare, I cannot in spite of dislike in other directions fail to yield him gratitude on the part of the despised and disillusioned romantics who were slaughtered in the massacres between 1890 and 1920. (But then some of us have always found this a confused world in which one admired a man for this thing and disliked him for that.)

When psycho-analysis begins to discuss sentimentalists everyone knows that very morbid lesions are about to be revealed. The man who christened the race we are here discussing has been stretched on the post-mortem table of this pitiless science by a certain Dr. A. DeFroe. It is not the intention of our modest inquiry to stop long here. Just enter for a moment the door of the dead-house, and note where poor Yorrick lies upon the copper-slab table, his most intimate viscera and organs neatly dissected. . . . Alas, poor Yorrick! Where be your gibes now, your gambols, your songs, your flashes of merriment, that were wont to set the table in a roar? Not one now to mock your own grinning?

It is a pitiful sight (if you can feel pity for sentimentalists) to see Laurence Sterne's fleshless skull made ready for a museum shelf and his body streched prone, while Dr. DeFroe sums up his findings in the

words of the caged starling of the *Sentimental Journey:* "I can't get out!"

Says the Doctor (with all the solemnity of italics): "*The opinion that has been formed about Sterne and his novels must be revised.* . . . It is the tragedy of a Human Soul that is fettered by sexual cravings, and is struggling to get free, but who from the deep of his Unconscious Self laments:

'I can't get out, I can't get out.'"

We turn away somewhat depressed, and, behold, just outside the door stands "a man with pale face and clad in black," with hectic cough and brilliant eyes, who from without laughs and looks in. And when we ask "Who are you?" he quizzically answers: "Don't puzzle me!" just as he answered the commissary at Lyons on another occasion. And so we pass on somewhat reassured as to one victim of science.

Whatever the virtues of this strange race of men (granted they have any virtues) the chief of their sins is cowardice. Here at the side of the road of life sits the dreaded Sphinx. When she propounds her riddles the brave man, however much of a fool the gods may have made him, will stop and try to answer as best he can, even though he must be torn to pieces for his attempt. But too often the sentimentalist—not Sterne, who had courage, but the really cowardly one—merely replies to his questioner with a saucer of

milk and a ribbon, and cheerfully hastens on down the road.

It is the veils employed to cover the facts of sex and death that have received the most elaborate embroidery at the hands of those who dare not look into the eyes of the Sphinx, and who therefore piously and comfortably hide them. Whether the world is better or worse than it used to be, certainly the franker explanation of sex to the young is better than the method of ignoring it once prevalent. Perhaps this apparently self-evident proposition may be denied by some, but it is hardly possible that anyone will deny the improvement which lies in clearing domestic relationships of much sentimental rubbish which once cluttered them, as innumerable ugly ornaments cluttered many drawing-rooms of the period. When Captain Brassbound tears up the picture of his idolized mother, when the mother of "So Big" realizes the contemptible nature of her idolized son, then we can draw a deep breath and say: "Well, whatever our own faults and whatever the virtues of the 1860's, they couldn't do that anyhow!"

The particular devil under consideration (who still sets up his throne in the midst of many of the best regulated households), is sometimes a very crude and sometimes a very subtle monster. As an example of the latter manifestation, consider those domestic situations, familiar to everyone, where, in the name of loving obligation, many make bitter and futile sacrifice to one, and where all concerned agree to call bitterness, love, and futile things, important. How far

do the victims and the victimizer really deceive themselves? Certainly it is not unusual to find victimizers who cloak selfishness under the name of love, and if you continue long enough to unwrap their soft, heavy-scented, sentimental swathings you will find that these hold at their center something as hard and sharp as a knife-blade. The victims of such an individual might well plead:

"But, by the shades beneath us, and by the Gods above,
Add not unto your cruel hate your yet more cruel love."

(Instead of which they really say "Yes, Mother dear," and "Certainly, Grandfather," and "Why, of course, Auntie.") The relation of such a selfish sentimentalism to sadism is obvious enough. Indeed one might say that the latter is often just a new fashionable name for an old complaint.

Now there are presumably certain individuals entirely immune to all sentimentality, whether in its bad or less bad manifestations, and to whom slight and severe symptoms are alike unknown. To such all this is at best an impersonal and academic discussion. If, however, a man is ignorant whether he does or does not harbor the seeds of the disease, I can suggest an easy experiment which is infallible for detecting the simpler forms of our malady.

Apparatus for this experimental test is easily procured. You must get a city hospital on the corner of a down-town street, and you must get it in a hot August twilight. At a little distance you must have children playing in the street under a glaring electric

light, their movements quick and vigorous, their voices loud and shrill. To perform the experiment you merely walk past the building, and simultaneously hear a piano and smell a smell. The piano is preferably played by one of a number of nurses who have been working hard all the hot day, but now have appeared in fresh uniforms. Some sit listlessly fanning in the dim room, one leans out the window. The one at the piano is playing "Just A Song at Twilight" or something like that. The smell is that indescribable but unmistakable old cooking-disinfectant-anaesthetic odor peculiar to hospitals.

Now if, while you walk slowly past in the circumstances mentioned, your eyes do not suddenly begin to swell and burn with congestion, and if something does not leap out of the darkness and catch you brutally by the throat and shake and strangle you . . . if this does not happen then be sure you are not a sentimentalist of the more usual type.

It should also be explained that the experimenter must possess besides a nose, an ear (though not too delicate a one) and the memory of certain years of hot and despairful youth devoted to the study of medicine.

> "Smells are surer than sounds or sights
> To make the heart-strings crack.
> They bring those awful voices o'nights
> That whisper 'Old Man, come back.'"

Everybody, except people without noses like Wordsworth (who lacking both sense of smell and sense of humor was so infinitely greater a poet than

myriads of singers with both)—everybody has recognized the closeness of scent to sentiment. Fewer realize that both words are derived from the same source. In this, I suspect, might be found a fact of profound significance, but if so, it is either too subtle or too simple for me to explain it. Enough to observe that the two things went out of fashion together.

I remember when I was young an old gentleman who when he paid us a visit would come down to breakfast, holding in one hand a palm-leaf fan and in the other a very large pocket-handkerchief redolent with eau de Cologne. *Nous avons changê tout cela! Autres temps autres sentes!* I first wrote "dear old gentleman," but it sounds much too patronizing to express my feeling toward him, and while he lived no man could have patronized him with impunity. He was a gentleman if I know one when I see him—or smell him. He had written verse himself—he liked to quote Horace—he had played his part in war and legislation—he had been the mayor of his city (no mean city then) and as such entertained Thackeray, sitting and talking with him late into the night. Once he had almost fought a duel, and if he did not fight it, it was from no lack of willingness to fulfill in every way the demand of a code of life in which he simply and steadfastly believed. His kind and his code are long dead, but their memory is not altogether forgotten. The vaseline vulgarity of the idolizing movies, no less than the acid ink of revilers, still preserve that memory.

Well, eau de Cologne (4711) provides for some of us the surest means of bringing back the memory of an era which Mrs. Wharton with inspired perception called the Age of Innocence. I saw its last sunset glow, caught the last whiffs of what a bitter modern critic has called its "lingering fragrance." What the Younger Generation is going to do with this old-fashioned fragrance, which we used to call sentiment, is as fascinating a problem as what Socialism is going to do with Fashion. Death, mockery, and the commonplace are always with us no less permanently than the poor. Any one of these four, as well as many other distressing concomitants of life, might seem to render the enjoyment of any sort of sentiment except the most intense and most sincere—that is of any sentiment save that entirely untainted with sentimentality—difficult for any except the most frivolous or the most depraved. I suppose really hard realists consider sentiment sinful, and sentimentality something still worse, that is, silly. I do wish the younger generation would announce whether this thing partakes of the nature of venial or mortal sin.

And yet—whatever the verdict, it is certain that some of us will continue to enjoy this old-fashioned blending of emotion with light phantasy, whether or not that emotion can always show proper relationship to actual fact. Yes, even though it may at times express itself in idle tears. And so let the orchestra now play the old waltz, "Sourires et Larmes d'Avril," and those who have scented handkerchiefs prepare to use them as they think best.

I recall an old engraving of the type which hung in every drawing-room fifty years ago. A row-boat on a Swiss lake holds three persons. The little peasant boy who has been rowing now stops and gazes idly on the other two. These are a young couple on their honeymoon, who are standing up in the boat. The husband, his hat gay with flowers, looks with amused though loving regard upon his bride, and she, with her arms still about him, has turned away to peer intently over the edge, through the sunny unruffled surface, into the unplumbed depths below. *Unergründlich* was the title.

Unfathomable. Such beautiful, still, sunny weather. Above the lake the Alps mount high into the blue. Summer morning. Youth and love. Ah, Gretchen (or Marie or Kätchen), there are many shining marks for the satiric shaft, but you, I think the savagest would spare. You are such a simple thing, such a stupid one if the term is preferred. Stupid, simple, *unschuldig*. If one were looking for an example of unadulterated sentimentalism, you and your sisters of race and time would furnish it. Your flounced skirt, as I remember it, would suggest the 60's.

In my mind's eye, I like to follow you, Gretchen, after that hour on the Bodensee. You go back to the Gasthaus. You go back to your own town. You have many children. You die and go to your grave with its pious inscription. You continue to live—so far as this is continuing to live—in many descendants. Some fifty years after that hour two of your sons and

seven of your grandsons die in the Great War,—a couple in the American ranks,—die amid surroundings and circumstances strangely contrasting with the sunlight and peace of that hour when you floated on the lake's surface, and for a puzzled moment peered hopelessly into the depths, turning the next to weep idle unavailing tears in your lover's arms.

And here am I today on another summer morning, floating like all of us, before or since, above unsearchable depths. For the moment the surface is sunny and unruffled. If I choose to look over the boat's edge, and try to see what is beneath, it must be admitted that the eye of sentiment or sentimentality does not pierce far. Just about as far, and no farther, than the eye of cynicism or of faith or anything else. Yet, it must be admitted, just as far. *Unergründlich.*

SOPHISTICATION

SOPHISTICATION

— as like one of these harlotry players as ever I see!
THE HOSTESS OF THE BOAR'S HEAD.

Two things youth desires beyond all others: freedom from ridicule, and intensity of sensation. Most men keep something of these desires all their lives, but they come to desire other things as well, and as men grow older fear of ridicule and hunger for sensation gradually grow less intense.

Now when different periods of time are contrasted, some can be distinguished by what may roughly but conveniently be called a spirit of affirmation and others by a spirit of negation.

If there is any truth in the above generalizations it follows that youth in an affirmative period will be more concerned with intensity of sensation, and in a period of negation with a desire to escape ridicule. That the latter is the present situation few observers would deny.

Some years ago something came into fashion which was to exert as far-reaching an effect on popular thought as evolution. The Victorians went in, as we all know, very strongly for seriousness and for simplicity. They explained that life was real; life was earnest—that simple faith was more than Norman blood—that as we grow older we grow simpler. Then after this period in which seriousness and sim-

plicity were cultivated with a conscious intensiveness rarely found in other periods, the thing mentioned came into fashion—and its name was "A Sense of Humor." One doesn't look for exact dates in such matters, but one might guess that the beginning of the popular appeal of a sense of humor starts with Matthew Arnold finding fault with Shelley for failing to possess such a thing. The date of the essay in question was 1888. At any rate in the 80's and 90's and in the first decade of the present century people talked a great deal about this thing—much more than they do today.

A sense of humor is one of those things which different people rate differently in importance, but which no one likes to be accused of lacking. Everybody knows he or she possesses one, and nearly everybody is apt to be a little suspicious of the other fellow's. Everybody likes to recognize the point in a joke at which he is expected to laugh, and everybody likes to reserve his laughter should he consider it unmerited. There are times when one wants the right to say with Queen Victoria: "We are not amused"; there are times when one wants, in answer to the question, "Do you see nothing there?" (i.e. in some pointless joke) to answer (with Queen Gertrude): "Nothing at all; yet all that is I see." Nearly everyone has known the exasperating experience of saying something purposely absurd to which some silly ass immediately calls attention, and either appropriates your joke as his own, or laughs at and not with it, assuming that you had not intended your

own absurdity. All of us, even the most insensitive, have suffered excruciating pain from those simple and genial souls who mistake their animal spirits for humor. For instance there is a type of joke in "Punch," the pawky, pointless, good-natured English joke, which plunges me in gloom and steeps me in bitterness. Fortunately in this case I can always completely recover my cheerfulness by reading Mr. Milne or Mr. Herbert or most of the other contributors. And, finally, in considering this matter there should be noted how a conscious sense of possession enables a person generously to forgive his more obtuse brother. "So and so is the best sort in the world. Pity, of course, he never could see a joke." Or, if it is a lady speaking: "Such a love, but hasn't a *ray*, my dear, not a *ray!*" What a blessed assurance is this which convinces each of us of our own subtle and whimsical point of view—our power to see through the prosaic surface of things into those fascinating incongruities beneath, which are hidden from our simple and sober-sided fellow citizens. Thus, should you, my Reader, find this very poor stuff, do not let that arouse compassion for myself, since I, on the other hand, am prepared to admit all your excellent qualities—excepting just that crowning one you lack.

I said people don't talk about a sense of humor as much as they did. Really smart people don't talk of it at all. You are expected to have one, or rather you are expected to have something yet more precious which includes all its good qualities and adds many

more. Somewhat in the same way there was once a time when a dress-suit case (then so called) was a mark of distinction, though no one feels pride in such possession now, that is, no rational adult. (To be accurate, I have known one individual made inordinately proud by such an acquisition, but she was only a little girl aged nine, and therefore does not deserve consideration.) The thing that has—in the best circles, if you know what I mean—superseded the place of humor, possessing all its merits but adding new excellencies, is, of course, Sophistication. At the present hour you don't read that an admired author shows a sense of humor, but you do constantly read that he "shows a deft and daring sophisticated touch." I, for one, read it so constantly that I get heartily bored with its repetition. As with humor, so with its contemporary supplanter, no one cares to be accused of its lack. Perhaps it is because I am really diffident as to my own possession that I am inclined to grumble over its ascription to so many contemporary authors, but really the thing does seem to be cultivated with an enthusiasm for mass production which would appear incompatible with its essential nature.

A sense of humor and a sense of sophistication are two things alike in many ways, and in other ways quite different. The difference might be stated by saying that the former makes you see the fun in a joke and laugh, and that the latter makes you see the fault in a joke, and shows you that it is not worthy of laughter. Obviously that is by no means the whole

story, but it is a large part of it. At the heart of humor is surprise, surprise wakened by incongruity and in turn waking laughter. At the heart of sophistication is experience, experience too well acquainted with incongruity to find it mirthful. There are notable exceptions, but they are not sufficient to obliterate the fact that "the sad young men" of the hour are the sophisticated young men, and that is one reason why they are so sad. To feel the humorous is not less to be shocked in an agreeable way than to feel the disgusting is to be shocked in a disagreeable way. That definition of the civilized man which declares him one not easily shocked serves no less for the sophisticated. A further difference in the two things we are considering is apparent when we note that while we can distinguish a thing called "wild humor," and while humor often grows better as it grows wilder, there is no similar thing which we could call wild sophistication. Indeed though *daring*, even oftener than *deft*, is the adjective applied with distressing uniformity to the admired sophisticate, I think his inability to feel either fun or shame is frequently matched by his lack of any spontaneous self-assertion. Of these elegant and unshockable people, it is often their tameness that is shocking to me.

Now I started with the assumption that of youth's two chief desires one was to escape ridicule, and that this was particularly noticeable in an age marked, like our own, by the spirit of negation. If what has been said is true, one can see a reason why young people at the present time are so uniformly and so

earnestly determined to prove themselves sophisticated—why for instance we meet the thing as inevitably in any college magazine as we meet suitcases and coonskin coats among a group of traveling collegians. Whether this is a thing good or bad, wise or foolish, temporary or lasting, it is at least undeniably one that is fashionable and usual today.

As with greatness so with sophistication, a modern Malvolio is either born to it, or achieves it, or has it thrust upon him. It is to the members of the second group that the words of this essay are chiefly addressed. With the naturally sophisticated—or cynical or satirical—those of us who happen to be born under a kindlier planet have no right to quarrel. They are what heredity has made them, and so—however different—are we. Even with those upon whom a disintegrated post-war world has thrust bitter disillusion and paralyzing complexity, we have also perhaps as little right to find fault. But the second group, those who choose this attitude of mind not because it is inherently their own either by natural temperament or by experience, but because it is the proper thing at the moment, the latest, the most correct, thing in intellectual collegiate clothing,—those who would achieve sophistication—to those I speak.

Such may well answer: "Well, what of it? If it suits us—if we like it—isn't that enough?" No, I don't think it is enough, and I am trying to explain why.

First I repeat that I am not chiefly concerned with those wearers to whom the present style is naturally becoming. When such youths are both comfortable

and well-fitted there is little more to be said. No, my concern is with two finally eliminated groups: those who like it but to whom it isn't really suitable; those whom it neither pleases nor suits.

The writer boasts no pre-eminent vision or observation. He has, however, had the opportunity to watch young men over a considerable period of time. And his conviction, be it worth much or little, is that a large number of the younger generation who go in for sophistication, cynicism, and satire, are like that large group of people who adopt a particular fashion of dress which in some cases suits their tastes but not their figures, and in some cases suits neither. Some have their natural movements restricted and, however pleased to be stylish, are uncomfortable; some are rendered unpleasing to the sight of any discriminating observer; and many are in both of these unenviable predicaments.

The reasons why a spirit of negation, with its accompaniments of sophistication, cynicism, and satire, is today popular and instinctively chosen as the part of wisdom, and why affirmation, with its simplicity, loyalty, and sympathy, is instinctively repudiated as an old-fashioned, foolish thing, are, of course, manifold and subtle, but a few seem obvious enough. Some applaud and some deplore but all men recognize the dissolving today of all sorts of patterns, whether of manners, conduct, or belief. Such breaking-down of patterns—the reaction to the enthusiasm of the war—the modern discovery of many pious frauds and fraudulent pieties—all these are doubtless causes of

the attitude of negation, though it is just as correct to call them results. After all the more significant question is, not how a temper of mind arose, but what we are going to do about it. A few professional historians and philosophers are concerned with the first; everybody—including those who disclaim concern—with the latter. Yet it might be well if a little wider sense of history or philosophy could touch some who suppose that the phase of thought which is last in the sense of latest is necessarily last in the sense of final. Granted that the modern temper of thought is as pessimistic and futilitarian as Mr. Krutch so convincingly interprets it, how can anyone, professional or amateur thinker, dare to assume that it will always remain so. To make such a dogmatic assertion is to throw overboard the previously employed sceptical spirit, and to become the most arrogant of affirmers. The old-style fundamentalist of supernatural orthodoxy finds an odd counterpart in this new-style fundamentalist of rational scepticism; one believes in a physical hell of fire in which the doomed are to be damned, the other in a more tenuous hell of lack of meaning in which the entire universe is damned. There is, one must admit, something which demands respect in both beliefs, at least in such sincere and forcible affirmers as Calvin and Mr. Krutch, but were I the last unbeliever in the world, I should still lift my voice in protest. It is easy for either or both camps to say, "You are damned." It is impossible to prove it.

Now if at this point the writer could mount Mr. Wells' Time Machine and return to fifty years ago,

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he would doubtless here quote certain popular—that is in 1880 popular—lines from Browning's "Bishop Bloughram." But as these might sound unconvincing in 1930, let him cite instead the dying words of Mr. Wells' own William Clissold. And if even Mr. Wells himself is suspected of a taint of old-fashioned sentimentalism ("cum vix justus sit securus" in this stern day) then let him cite Spandrell's end in Mr. Aldous Huxley's *Point Counterpoint*. I am aware that by the nature of things Mr. Huxley may in turn be regarded tomorrow as an overkindly and overcredulous observer. Nevertheless today he stands satisfactorily for the hard-boiled. And my point is simply that no one can be too dogmatic in these matters, not even the most sceptical.

Fear, as we are today constantly reminded, lurks ever at the edge of our being, like a hidden savage; at any moment he may appear in the open, hideous, alien, naked, and war-painted, prepared to mutilate and kill us. This enemy has tracked humanity's march through all ages. What distinguishes our own time is a franker acknowledgment and discussion of his unseen presence. An older and more heroic school tried to ignore fear, but we are more sensible if less stoical. Following the tactics of the psycho-analyst we try to lure the enemy into the open and there overcome him. As increasingly with civilization (if that is the name for greater bodily comfort and security) our dangers become less physical, the fear of ridicule concerns us to a greater degree. Perhaps as good a criterion as another of the civilized man would

be a sensitiveness to being regarded as uncivilized—and hence absurd—by other civilized men. In the young particularly, but in all people today, one of the greatest fears is that of being laughed at. And sophistication is the trusted weapon of defense against ridicule, the pioneer's Long Tom against the lurking savage.

Of course the true satirist is one who carries his firearms not only for defense but for offense as well. Whether the fact be contemptible or no (and I for one see nothing contemptible in it) the majority of humans regard such weapons of offense as, on the whole, offensive. The majority of humans do not live to kill though they are prepared to kill in order to live. No sane man ought to deny the perennial worth of the satirist—though unfortunately many sane men do. Bunk is always with us, often in the most respected and unsuspected places. The debunking process, the deflation of solemn men and institutions full of wind not wisdom, this is a matter as salutary as it is amusing. And chiefly we should be grateful to the satirist because he often delivers us from fear—from fear of bad men and institutions, and dares come to mock where cowards remain to pray. It is not my style, but I can admire and applaud it. And seeing the great merits of a type which can unite two such fine things as laughter and courage, I can forgive the satirist many offenses against good taste and charity, and even for his bloodthirstiness when he fights against united piety and stupidity and their foster-child cruelty.

I do object when he tacitly assumes that the satiric spirit natural to himself is natural to all men, when he tacitly claims that those possessing it are necessarily at closer grips with reality than those motivated by altruism and love. The satirist is a specialist and shows all the merits and defects belonging to specialism: enthusiasm for his trade; thorough knowledge, to a certain point, of his material; and a successful technique—all these balanced by ignorance of, or indifference to, the world outside his material; and an innate idée fixe that there is one trade more important than all others, his own.

In such a discussion as the present, one should try to keep in mind, however roughly, some sort of differentiation between a number of words which are sometimes used to mean the same thing but often to mean different ones. Sometimes the qualities they represent are blended in one man; sometimes they can be contrasted by comparing one individual with another. Thus Thomas Henry Huxley, though the father of agnosticism and a realist, was neither cynic nor pessimist. His grandson shares some of his qualities and not others. Mr. Dreiser is not only a pessimist and agnostic but something more positive, a denier,

"Der Geist der stets verneint,"

and though Mephistopheles' words might be his motto, he is neither diabolist nor cynic. Mr. Mencken is, of course, the satirist, but it is less easy to say in what proportions he exhibits the two dif-

ferent types of satire, that which mocks to mend and that which mocks for mischief and malice. Doubtless he would disclaim the honor—with a wit and vehemence I cannot emulate—but I am suspicious that he shows something of the former as well as the latter. Mr. Shaw certainly mocks to mend, and the self-exposure of his once convincing diabolism is an old story. Mr. Cabell's satire is of the second type, presumably 100% pure in its freedom from the utilitarian and moral. And so with Mr. Nathan who conveniently stands for the cynic. Such differentiations are dull enough, but, however dull and inadequate, they serve here the purpose of attempting to distinguish the spirit of sophistication. Obviously this spirit characterizes some of the above names, applies less to others, and to yet others is quite foreign.

Sophistication rests, as was said, upon experience. Yet no one would be so absurd as to claim it as the invariable result of experience. Saints, stevedores, and scientists are all types of men who get familiar with the world and its good and evil, the rough stuff as well as the fine, yet they are rarely sophisticates. Sophistication, as popularly employed, means one sort of experience—a wide experience of the wrong and evil of the world, combined with a modish tolerance and an amused interest. The real possessor of this spirit can't be shocked and he can't be made ridiculous. And to us unsophisticated unfortunates, who find plenty to shock us and make us absurd, who are neither assured holders of one firm conviction by which we can save the world nor absolute sceptics

assured that it can't be saved and isn't worth saving —to us who are merely slightly envious and considerably perplexed members of the great brotherhood of well-meaning duffers—to us there is something exasperating in this smooth self-satisfaction of the sophisticate; it is not only smooth: it is smug, as smug as the smugness of the Unco Guid.

The exponents of this spirit take their place on the Zion of the contemporary elect and are too much at ease there. They exaggerate so fatuously the benefits of a knowledge of evil. Their obsession with sex grows a bore—in a true sense of the words, a beastly bore. They are so apt to refer to unnatural vice as though such knowledge conferred some cachet of esoteric wisdom in all aesthetics and philosophy. They repudiate so stupidly the obvious worth that obtains, when all is said, in certain natural and simple things. (It is not really true that "Providence and Sir Walter Besant have exhausted the obvious," but the contemners of the obvious have really exhausted us.) Their elegance so often combines the morals of a dancing master, the manners of a whore, and a headwaiter's knowledge of the winecard. Surely some appreciation of the conception of life in terms of a dance is not incompatible with the conviction that some of the modern participants are gigolos and some pimps.

"And though they call it *decadence*,

(or called it that in the 90's)

It's rotten just the same."

Well, all this may be regarded as ineffectual and blustering protest, but at any rate one cannot deny that the glazed hardness of the sophisticate is one true criterion, though in another direction, of course, his desire for sensitiveness must be admitted. His ideal might be defined as hardening of the heart without hardening of the arteries. "One commandment give I unto you," spoke Zarathustra, and certain modern disciples accept and apply it as though it were the formula of a cure-all patent medicine. It would be as sensible to make a panacea of Be Hot or Be Cold or Be Tender as of that famous Be Hard. It is epigrammatic; it is in many cases arresting and stimulating; but as a universal prescription for health, physical or spiritual, it is silly. Keep Cool too is often an excellent injunction, but to an arctic explorer in danger of freezing it is poor advice. Two large and important groups may, let us admit, doubtless find benefit in the Nietzschean prescription: to the tender-minded religious enthusiasts who see the world only in terms of universal love, to them Be Hard may act as a corrective. And those tough-minded individualists who see existence only as force, to them Be Hard may prove a stimulant. But however large and important these two groups, humanity in general, which is the rest of us, is larger and more important, and we are not altogether either tender or tough. Yet a large part of what is a representative portion of this intermediate class can be found in those contemporary college youths to whom the commandment of the powerful and erratic individualist has become pop-

ularized and vulgarized into something less corrective and stimulating: Be Hard-boiled.

"From humility, reverence, and tenderness of heart, Good Lord, deliver us! From all kindliness, and simplicity, save us, O God!" Hear the litany that goes up today in unison from a hundred campuses and a thousand studios to the deity of correct thought and up-to-date youth! Whether more or less musical than a Sabbath of Methodist hymns it is just as monotonous, and it is certainly more comical to hear a thousand individualists praying together that each may be different than to hear a hundred pious souls praying to be united in fellowship.

Let it be repeated that my chief quarrel is not with the genuine hard-bitten realists, but with those who follow them and don't belong in their ranks, those who grow hard at the danger of growing brittle, the

> "brittle intellectuals
> Who crack beneath a strain,"

and in ten years after graduation have developed nervous breakdowns and nervous dyspepsia, and require very tender care indeed. The flaneur whose philosophy of futilitarian hedonism is native has his real charm. Don Juan in Hell is attractive because he remains a Don Juan though in Hell, and proves that his deviltry will neither bleach nor burn. Mr. Arthur Symonds somewhere makes merry over the anecdote (told in Hutton's life of Scott) of how an English regiment was kept quiet under fire by the reading aloud of *Marmion*. What a deliciously absurd test for liter-

ary excellence! I am not at all sure it is so absurd, but in any case the thing suggests a practical method of discovering the sincerity of certain disbeliefs. While psychological tests are useful for determining everything else, I submit that to discover whether a man is a real cynic or pessimist, a physical test might be better. The very simple physical tests of pain and danger, grantedly of doubtful efficacy in an inquisition to punish one kind of heresy, might well determine the reality of another kind, of the honest belief in non-belief, so to speak. They would show whether the subject was, so to speak, sincere in his insincerity and solidly confirmed in his irresponsibility. Will the subject still think as poorly of life when immediately threatened with its loss? Will he continue to think as highly of jests when the situation is essentially no joke? The sight of a really great and wicked wit entering the vasty hall of death itself with no loss of his usual ease and epigram has something exhilarating, but when the author of a bottomlessly pessimistic editorial, or a daringly shocking jest, proves to be a gentle lad with big, sensitive eyes, and an embarrassed manner, then you—perhaps illogically—doubt whether personality and philosophy are, as in the other case, altogether consonant. You—it may be unfairly—question whether cancer or shell fire might not render him less indifferent to the value of life, and more indifferent to the worth of flippant wit. Is it overcynical to mistrust whether a good many young diabolists who want to raise the Devil would not be too bashful to dare face him once really raised?

Mr. Cabell and other daring spirits like to remind us that the great Jehovah of the Hebrew Old Testament is no longer a universal ruler but only a small tribal deity. In any case he has done more memorable things than any tribal divinity of whom I have heard. And: "Surely he scorneth the scorners!" is told of him. Whatever one's opinion of the speaker's authority, such an utterance rings with a promise, which, independent of its literal truth or falsity, seems to suggest a blessed hope for humanity. And however incapable of exact exegesis, I, for one, believe the promise bears at least a modicum of eternal truth. I believe that with the rest of humanity, which is so constantly tripped by error and trapped by absurdity, the scorner too is sometimes wrong and sometimes ludicrous. Only a vague and irrational belief, resting on no possible proof, yet I am not ashamed to confess that it gives me great comfort.

It has been the writer's fate to speak at a good many gatherings of youth, where some of my audience were bored and silent, and some bored and more demonstrative. Some were sober and some apparently less so. Like any other man I always protest a little grumblingly when I consent to speak, and yet if honest, I should admit that it is only simple truth to say: "I gladly accept the privilege of this opportunity to address," etc., etc. For it *is* a privilege to speak to youth. Perhaps what I have to say would be of value, could they ever hear. Perhaps this time there

will be present one who will listen. . . . That, of course, is doubtful; what, on the other hand, is certain are the ironic cries with which a part of the audience will encourage me: "Is *that* so?" "Mr. Chairman, I propose a song!" "Give him a drink!" "True, brother, true!" "Well, what of it?"

To such accompaniments then, suppose the following delivered:

"My dear boys—dear whether noisy or silent, drunk or sober, sane or mad—I wish I could say what I want to. I wish just this once my faltering lips might be touched with a coal of fire from the altar and my dull brain cleared, that this once the heavy curtains of circumstance and personality would not shut from you what is in my heart. You think that age cannot understand, but it can—a little. A little understanding is what we sometimes receive in payment for our youth.

"Listen: you want two things. The first of them is to be spared ridicule. Age learns to bear ridicule, but it is ignominy, it is death for youth. And you feel how absurd it is to try to believe what isn't true—and later be laughed at for believing. You must be *sure*. And so in sophistication you think to find security; but I tell you this thing too is not sure. The only security is—not sophistication,—the only security, as a wise man has said, is courage.

"The second thing you desire, you desire far more than the first. And this second thing is intensity. More than security you want intensity and sensation. That's what makes you often do such wild

mad things in peace. That's what makes you go off to be killed when war comes, and you pour out your blood like water on the ground to the disgust of the pacifists who cannot understand. I understand. I have watched you. You go laughing to death—*but it is no longer sophisticated laughter. . . .*"

Here perhaps the ironic comments of my hearers grow too obvious or the chairman too restless. Anyway I sit down—and just what I meant to say, and never say, appears before me in distressing clarity—and the Chairman leans over to declare (what he would as inevitably declare had I spoken like Demosthenes, or merely recited irregular French verbs): "*Great* speech!" And soon he is on his feet again: "Our *next* speaker . . ." and so on.

LONELINESS

LONELINESS

Mir gäb' es keine grössere Pein,
Wär' ich im Paradies allein.

GOETHE.

Loneliness is a state of mind which exhibits all gradations from pleasing pensiveness to stark despair. Some young people play with it and find in it a piquant enjoyment; on others it descends with the terror of panic, but age always instinctively cowers at its approach, and escapes as best it can on tottering legs. When we think of the thousands of the old who so suffer, as well as of all others to whom, in prison or like solitude, it means genuine pain, then any save the most fully justified self-pity for our own loneliness grows contemptible enough.

The distinction must be kept in mind between *being lonely* and *being alone*. The first condition means of course, feeling lonely; it is a subjective state of mind, and may or may not be justified by an actual condition of isolation. To be removed from others need not produce loneliness, as the fine old phrase, "numquam minus solus quam solus," testifies. On the other hand Bacon's description of solitude in a crowd, that "gallery of painted faces," concerns a condition which is often described. A case less often considered is that of the individual who lives in the midst of his fellows in actual isolation

though unaware of the fact, and who deserves to feel loneliness but does not. The most striking example of this would be the happy madman. Such an individual who fails to make proper contact with the world of not-self, who fails to understand what that world really is, may nevertheless live perfectly content within himself, unaware of his solitude. Older pieties have imagined such individuals under the special care of the divine, and there must be beauty and consolation in such belief. Whether science furnishes any analogous suggestion I cannot say. Probably science would declare such a matter entirely outside its concerns and refuse to consider it. However, we who are not scientists may be pardoned if we do feel concerned. And perhaps just as religion has on occasions in the past refused to discuss certain problems, so perhaps science now sometimes refuses to concern itself with questions in which the wider sense of humanity as a whole finds legitimate interest. Is it not possible that the insane man, like the child, that "best philosopher," like perhaps even the animal world, may live nearer to reality, in certain directions at least, than the more exclusively rationalized man? Might not the old idea of divine care in such cases be then an expression of such fact?

But nearly everybody's acquaintance contains individuals whom the world judges entirely sane, and who, though constantly living and conversing with others, are to so great a degree subjected to their own ideas that they live in an unconscious solitude. Science calls them introverts.

Since it is obvious that no one, however great his powers of observation and apprehension, can become entirely cognizant of his surroundings, and since all human intercourse is similarly limited in scope of mutual apprehension and understanding, the question of the amount of an individual's isolation or communication would seem simply one of degree. It is to me a fascinating question of just how near one individual can really approach another, and what proportion of such nearness of approach different human relations offer. Again, a question which science would doubtless ignore as futile, but which humanity continues to ask. Poetry, let us be grateful, shows herself more anxious to aid poor, stupid, questioning humanity in such matters, and while her more reserved younger sister remains silent, the muse is ready with many answers. The trouble, however, lies in the fact that these answers prove so conflicting. If she tells of

> "Two souls with but a single thought,
> Two hearts that beat as one,"

she also declares that

> "In the sea of life enisled . . .
> We mortal millions live *alone*."

For poetry, of course, merely records the intense subjective experience of one highly sensitive individual, and while, if it happens to be true poetry, it is truth for him (or, more accurately speaking, truth for him at the moment uttered), if it be denied by the next poet, such testimony does not much help humanity at large.

Yet, whether soluble or not, the problem remains, for me at any rate, as compelling as it is fascinating. (Perhaps the most compelling and fascinating problems of existence are never to be solved in any usual acceptance of the word.) Most of us feel that there exists at least *some* degree of "approach" by one entity of so-called personality to another, and granted this, then, could they but be observed, how interesting to record the varying amounts of approach in different cases. I could at the start be content to leave out of the question any possibility of absolute mutual understanding, whatever the romantic poets used to testify. Twin souls have gone out as surely as twin beds have come in. (Was there, one wonders, any possible cause and effect?) Certainly two souls cannot possess a single thought or two hearts beat as one, unless those souls and hearts are exact replicas—which psychology and anatomy alike declare they never are. (But what a good story Mr. Wells could write about absolutely identical twins!) There remains, however, the teasing question of relative approach, of partial identification so to speak, which is just as intriguing. Really why must science snub our natural if naïve questions with such superior airs? Can't they invent some sort of instrument in the psychological laboratory which with tests would measure the thing as accurately as blood pressure and motor reflexes are now recorded?

Once the mechanism and technique were satisfactorily developed what fun to submit all sorts of different pairs of individuals for examination! Thus:

two so-called romantic lovers; a man and woman under the influence of sexual passion but with little acquaintance and no intellectual interests in common; a married couple (a happy and an unhappy one); a mother and child; two eminent professors of philosophy; of biology; theologians; social workers; traveling men; philanthropists; business men, etc., etc. It is easy to think of many others: men in deadly personal conflict (difficult to adjust the instrument but doubtless possible); drunken companions; art critics; and many others.

In time there would be perfected a small portable mechanism, easily concealed in the vest pocket, which would accurately register just how near the bearer came to, or how far he remained from, the personality of any other individual within five feet. Young people contemplating matrimony would be saved a vast amount of unnecessary pain and humiliation. Each marriage licence would have to bear a properly certified physico-psychic personality-approach index (called a P.P.A.), and this would have to be as high as each particular state in the Union demanded. A tremendous convenience for the divorce courts. Incompatibility of temperament scientifically determined.

Personally, however, such large public benefits as our instrument might bring would interest me less than its application in particular cases. Such would be intensely interesting, though perhaps no less equally terrifying. For not only the maximum of possible nearness but the maximum of possible

distance would be alike revealed—not only the generous warmth which life with life engenders, but likewise the cold which it can endure in isolation and still survive. Naturally ardent young people eating their own hearts out at the dinner-tables of mean boarding-houses in great cities or little towns; the bereaved just coming out of the anaesthesia of the first shock of loss, and learning the ceaseless throb which follows such amputation; the aged, around whose ever-lessening movements death, day by day, closes like the ice around the Ugly Duckling in the old story; those aliens of their age whose heads are too hard to retain old faiths and whose hearts are too tender to forget them; and those other aliens, the Shelleyan antinomians,

> "companionless
> As the last cloud of an expiring storm,
> Whose thunder is its knell"——

in some such cases and conditions as these we might be able to discover the zero point, the absolute cold, which would mark a sense of absolute loneliness justified by absolute isolation.

Suppose yourself an ordinary individual who lives a little outside of New York, and drives in each day to business. It is your custom to get up early before anyone else appears in the house, get your own breakfast, drive yourself to a garage at 212th Street, leave your car there, and then go down town to your

office by the subway. Suppose that on a particular October morning you start this routine in no different a manner from that which you have followed for ten years. There is nothing to distinguish this one morning from any other—a bright, a cool, breezy day it promises to be. You are feeling about as usual—rather cheerful if anything. Things have been picking up a bit at the office recently. You look forward to the day's work with equanimity. This is Saturday, and you expect to get back in the afternoon for some golf.

So off you start in the early morning down the yet deserted road. You drive pretty briskly for it is possible to make good time before the traffic begins. Slowly there comes an odd sensation of surprise: although now well on your way, *you have met no one.* Usual enough in the earlier stages of your trip, but now most surprising. You drive faster. There is an odd growing sense of wonder in you unlike anything ever felt before. *You meet no one. You see no one.* On past the familiar streets and corners. All just as you have seen them a thousand times. Advertisements, shops, apartment houses, hot-dog stands, drugstores, all just as usual—except that they are utterly empty. *No one.* Instinctively you feel that the explanation must lie somewhere ahead. It *must* appear at any moment, and you drive rapidly on to meet it. But it doesn't appear, and slowly what was a great odd wonder turns into fear. A new kind of fear unlike any you ever felt before.

At the Plaza Hotel you stop the car. It is a little

after eight. The sunlight shows bright on the deserted streets. As you look down Fifth Avenue you can see how it falls at intervals in the intersection of the cross-streets. The traffic lights are still working, but *there is no traffic*. Not a car visible save the one you sit in. Not a person except yourself. *No one*. There is no sound now that the car has stopped. Silence as though you were sitting in an empty field. You are chilly and sweating and somewhat nauseated. You get stiffly out of the car. You enter The Plaza, ready for anything—dead men—massacred perhaps—a foreign army—pestilence—anything. And you find indoors as deserted as the streets without. Corridors, lobby, chairs, all perfectly natural—all utterly unnatural because all empty. You escape to the street with relief, and stand staring at General Sherman opposite.

You discover that a vast fear—a fear quite unlike any fear felt before—can be present along with a testy irritation. The whole thing is so absurd. Like a sort of silly and gigantic joke. Absurd? Why it's *impossible*. . . . And yet the ringing silence in your ears, and the deserted street square and park before your eyes, tell you it is a fact. The preposterous nature of it all. It isn't happening to a character in some story. It is happening to *you*. . . . Things go black before you, and then slowly shimmer back into sunshine and solidity to you sitting on the curb.

Now in stories people always ask if they are dreaming. Silly, of course you know you are not dreaming. Mad? You don't seem to be—but any-

thing might be possible. . . . You get up and walk to your car. (For a moment a stupid panic shook you that it might have disappeared. But there it is sitting utterly alone in the middle of Fifth Avenue, at quarter past nine of a bright morning.) You climb in. You start the engine, and the roar suddenly shatters the silence. You drive very slowly southward, keeping to the center of the street, while the traffic tower lights blink in a long procession before you. You find that you are expecting Something to come around the corner at each cross-street. You find that the noise of the car torments you because under its cover Something might approach unknown from behind, and you drive very slowly, constantly glancing over your shoulder. And still as you go on—past the University Club, past the St. Regis Hotel—still nothing. *No one.*

Foolish, monstrous thoughts approach the edge of your mind. Indistinct, menacing. You wish you could face them and think them out, or that they would go away. . . . When you pass St. Thomas' and St. Patrick's and The Brick Presbyterian Church . . . Suppose Something came out of one of them. (What a relief when at each in turn It doesn't!) . . . On through Times Square which looks strangely large. You know you are not dreaming. You don't *feel* as though you had gone crazy . . . *God turned a practical joker?* Possible? Hardly—yet if New York's population can disappear overnight why isn't anything possible? . . .

But at the office you pull yourself together. You

first help yourself to hot coffee at the lunch room downstairs. After all nothing has appeared to hurt you. All the afternoon you wander about the vast empty streets. Churches, restaurants, stations, libraries, shops, dwellings—in each and all it is as though the occupant had just walked out of sight a moment before. The first night is bad. You pass it locked in your office, tensely waiting and listening. And now begins your new life,—preposterous, impossible, and yet—actually happening. Day follows day. You explore—you even work again at the office—you live like Robinson Crusoe waiting for the rescue that never comes. There is never any fear of lack of food, fuel, or comforts. Year follows year. Perhaps after a time you explore. Once you even get so far as Philadelphia. And you are surprised—deeply surprised—at yourself that you can continue to eat, sleep, and live in absolute loneliness. Yet so it is. And then, after many years perhaps, there comes a day when you know you are dying. And the strange thing is that in that hour you are neither any more, nor any less, alone than the countless millions who, since time began, have died in the most commonplace circumstances.

Well, my Reader, what would *you* do if you happened to be the last man in the world, a hermit with a continent for a cell, and the temperature of social warmth down to absolute zero? Would you go mad, or get religion, or kill yourself, or live it out as men

have lived out Polar winters? Would you die screaming, as I remember Byron's Last Man did, or with the courage of Scott in the Antarctic (no figure of phantasy but as real a being as you or I), would you carry on to the end? For after I have enjoyed and forgotten a hundred piquant epigrams, one simple statement sticks in my mind: life is an affair which must be lived with honor and terminated with dignity.

If we could but get our little instrument invented it would prove particularly interesting in discovering to what extent identity, approach, nearness, unity—or whatever it should be named—is effected between men by institutions and organizations. Which binds men closer, church or nation? One would suppose the former, yet from 1914 to 1918 Catholic, Protestant, Jew, and freethinker, all fell into pattern around the foci of nationalism like iron filings scattered on a sheet of paper and held above the poles of a magnet. How instructive to observe the proportionate claims of family, race, caste, political party, creed, and college. ("I just *had* to go out and save that fellow when I found out he was a Yale man!"—or a Harvard man—or a graduate of Oshkosh Normal or New Babylon High.) Apparently a great army of fellow men actuated by the same loyalty as our own can cure our loneliness no less than one individual who shares our tastes and love. The thing would be to discover which human organizations, churches, sects,

benevolent societies, or clubs, best cure this usual human ailment, that is, not only cure the sense of loneliness, but the actual condition of isolation as well. There are so many situations which I should like to investigate. When thousands kneel together in silent prayer—or when they shout in unison at football games—or when they roar to greet returning troops—or when a smaller number

"scream with their fellows"

(their cachinnation more cacophonous than Bryant's *Waterfowl*) at cocktail parties,—it would be instructive to learn in each case just exactly how near to one another they really feel, and just exactly how near to one another they really come. (Please observe here how the writer refrains from anything so old-fashioned as to suggest *which* group of sharers of a single experience would probably be found brought closest together. Please admire how he eschews all sense of so-called moral evaluation. Let mankind make what comments it pleases. He, the scientist, is content only to observe.)

Meanwhile, the fact is that until the psychologists invent our instrument, men differ so widely one from another, and one period from another period, that generalization here, as so often elsewhere, remains a rather foolish and dangerous thing—though like other foolish and dangerous things very tempting to one class of minds. It is probable that many tough-minded individuals never feel loneliness; many tender-minded ones rarely escape it. Take that matter of

the "twin souls." Presumably for all, tough or tender, this would today seem a very far-fetched fancy. Yet the most popular American poet of the last century wrote, and his readers approvingly read, how

> "No one is so accurst by fate,
> No one so utterly desolate,
> But some heart, though unknown,
> Responds unto his own."

(In our day of companionate marriage the last lines might be amended:

> But some heart will prove fond
> And—for an hour—respond.)

And if Longfellow (as Mr. Herbert Gorman has so patiently explained to us) is too saccharinely sentimental for serious consideration, then remember that the stoical Matthew Arnold could write:

> "Each in his own strict line we move,
> And some find death ere they find love.
> So far apart their lives are thrown
> From the halved soul which is their own."

But then, in another poem, the same poet wrote:

> "'Thou hast been, shalt be, art, alone.'
>
> "Or if not quite alone, yet they
> Which touch thee are unmating things—
> Oceans and clouds and night and day;
> Lorn autumns and triumphant springs;
> And life, and others' joy and pain
> And love, if love, of happier men.

"Of happier men—for they, at least,
Have *dream'd* two human hearts might blend
In one, and were through faith released
From isolation without end
Prolong'd; nor knew, although not less
Alone than thou, their loneliness."

There is a satisfaction in quoting those noble though mournful words, but for practical help in settling our question of how much or how little man is doomed to loneliness, they are useless. The answer to that question must remain for each in his own heart. Only this we may say: that if at present many feel convinced of the individual soul's essential loneliness, such was not always true; that great voices in the past have bid us hope; and that what the past has hoped in one form, the future may hope in another. "Fecisti nos ad Te, et inquietum est cor nostrum donec requiescat in Te."

PATRONAGE

PATRONAGE

Momentous to himself as I to me
Hath each man been that ever woman bore;
Once, in a lightning-flash of sympathy,
I *felt* this truth, an instant, and no more.

WILLIAM WATSON.

I love temperate and indifferent natures.

MONTAIGNE.

Hamlet lists among the ills of life "the proud man's contumely." His patronage, I often think, is even worse. For contumely we can sometimes ignore, but patronage or condescension, as the origin of both words suggests, is thrust upon us and often unescapable. The contumelious proud man is apt to brush our trivial selves aside, and though for a moment he might like to annihilate us, he shows little disposition to linger over trifles. How different the attitude of many self-elected patrons! Their mercy keeps their victim alive on the rack of undesired benefaction. It endureth forever, or at least seems endless to the ungrateful recipient.

By patronage I mean self-elected fatherhood: the gratuitous commendation and benefaction, sometimes the neglect and condemnation, of a self-assumed superior for one he considers his inferior—and I ask is any social injury easier to find or harder to bear. Doubtless patronizers sin oftenest through stupidity, yet not rarely they consciously enjoy their

victim's pangs, and may exhibit the mildest or most extreme forms of sadism variously and subtly camouflaged.

We like to be liked and love to be loved; we can endure to be ignored; and we can meet honest dislike with such weapons as our religion, philosophy, or self-confidence vouchsafe us; but to be patronized is in a way harder than all these. It is to be told that—in the admirable phrase—we mean well, but we mean it so feebly. It implies that we are all right so far as we go, but that unaided, we don't go far enough really to matter. It is to be hospitably offered a dish at which your stomach turns and your gorge rises, and, which often as not, good manners forbid you to refuse. The situation varies in degree of unpleasantness as contempt and kindliness are variously blended. You may be expected to return thanks for scraps flung from the door, or you may only be made slightly sick at the stomach attending a banquet given in your honor. Such language is, of course, figurative in intention. Physical suffering is, generally speaking, more serious than all save the most serious of mental pains. However, if the sort of ill of which we speak is not the most serious, yet it is bad enough.

Condescension can be manifested in almost every human relationship, and, oddly enough, is frequently reciprocal. The form of it earliest and oftenest encountered is that of age for youth, to be met in turn by that of youth for age. According to an adage which still rankles in my boyhood's memory:

"Young people think old people are fools, but old people know young people are fools." Nor does such a saying altogether lack a sort of unpleasant paternal benevolence. Not genuinely kindly benevolence, but its spurious assumption by one who is good enough to impart truth to the ignorant. The saying implies that young people should be very grateful for such gratuitous enlightenment.

In spite of that other still older adage which recommends "maxima reverentia pueris," nothing is commoner than this fatuous attitude of older people to children. Here Christianity and modern science unite in rebuking the arrogant. One wonders, looking at many a pompous middle-aged parent, the elasticity of whose mind vanished twenty years before the ankylosis of his joints began, and whose apperception of beauty withered like an unwatered flower even earlier, one wonders how even so ossified a piece of human flesh can remain insensible to childhood's charm and mystery. If it is authority not inspiration which so sensible a citizen demands, then he might at least recognize the authority of his religion's founder and of the foremost psychological experts of the day. But no; dull, self-assured middle age, whether or no he quotes my objectionable adage, acts by its principle, and while young people think he is a fool, he *knows* they are. Of course both are right and both are wrong. And though the generalization will seem unwarranted to many, *I* believe age is of the two more at fault. Certainly it displays more of that terrible calm assurance of its own righteous

authority such as justifiably maddens the beholder into frenzied desire to maim, kill, and dispossess the beheld. Bloodier revolutions are caused by condescension than lack of bread. Certainly the eternal revolt of youth starts here.

My own experience is not a particularly wide one, yet I, like most men, have been patronized by all sorts of people. By old gentlemen with nicely poised pince-nez, which they removed as though to afford me assurance; by young intellectuals, viewing me scornfully through great horn-rimmed spectacles, and as violently contemptuous of *all* dogmas as the old gentlemen were snugly wrapped in one. I have known gentle pity from the pious orthodox, content to wait until we "grow a little older, and then perhaps see things in their true light," while fierce theophobes have considered me a tender-minded old dullard equally unworthy and incapable of being shown the truth. Yet they did show it—as they believed—hour on end. Thus in his time one may play many parts, though not what one could call leading parts.

I have been patronized by capitalists and radicals. The former did it with better manners, encouraging me to set up my own little men of straw that they might show me how easily they could knock them down. The radicals, less patient to allow me get my troops into the field, blew me out of my trenches before I could start an argumentative advance. Tactics differed; both enemies proved equally ruthless victors. And I have endured the fire both of hard-boiled Regular Army men and of—shall I say?

—soft-boiled Pacifists. High-Brows have found me tediously superficial and Low-Brows no less tediously academic.

There is an individual, the subject of many newspaper dispatches, who always arouses my sympathy. The item in which he figures generally runs something as follows: "Scranton (or it may just as well be Walla Walla, Memphis, Yazoo City or anywhere else); such and such a date; James Evans (or some other-named individual) was fatally wounded here today in a fight between strikers and police (or bootleggers and revenue officers, or rival gangs, or whatnot). Evans himself had taken no part in the quarrel." This item invariably bears the caption: "Innocent Bystander Fatally Wounded."

I always pause a moment before passing to the next, probably more important, item in order that I may pay my respects to my unknown kinsman, James. That brief dispatch suggests such tragic and ironic elements. Poor devil! A moment before he was going about his own business as securely as you and I are now at ours. Deep in his subconsciousness lay the comfortable assurance of an efficient police system and an elaborately constructed legal code, running like high protecting walls on either side of his path. And behold these are suddenly breached! Civilization and order betray him. Death leaps upon him out of the unforeseen.

The manifest unfairness of it! James had no in-

terest in the quarrel; neither side had any interest in him. Yet there he lies, victim of opposing forces with which he was totally unconcerned. Well, in this Innocent Bystander I see the picture of those of us who suffer patronage from two opposing camps of opinion, and who learn how

> "'Tis dangerous when the baser nature comes
> Between the pass and fell incensed points
> Of mighty opposites."

The reader may, if he likes, choose many examples of the Innocent Bystander from history and literature. My own favorite from the former is Erasmus at the time of the Reformation. From literature I should select, for comedy, Mr. Pickwick between the rival editors, on the occasion when he "rushed between the infuriated combatants just in time to receive the carpet-bag on one side of his body, and the fire-shovel on the other." And for a tragic Innocent Bystander in literature, Mercutio. Enough to say of him that he vindicates the rôle for all time, proving that one need not become a partisan to prove himself a brave man, and in his self-spoken epitaph expresses the last word of, and for, our devoted race:

> "A pox on both your houses!"

America today is as bipartitely partisan as Mercutio's Verona. The opponents on the two sides of most issues agree as absolutely in narrowness and prejudice as they differ in opinion. Take prohibition, for example. If the prohibitionists are fanatics, the

wets are sentimentalists. One would fain bring both face to face with cold, objective, unfeeling facts. And since it is, so far as I know, less often attempted to show up the sentimentalists of this quarrel, it would particularly gratify my sense of irony to contrast such a figure as Mr. Don Marquis' Old Soak—genial, tender, whimsical, and winning—with some other old soaks I have been privileged to know—irritable, harsh, prosaic, and repulsive, with person unkempt, breath foul, and manhood as completely emasculated as that of a querulous eunuch, bullies of women and cowards to men, the red blood of real emotion replaced in their veins by a watery wash of sentimentality.

Yet this orthodox dualism which pervades all American thought, this two-party system, insists I must be either Democrat or Republican,—Socialist or Capitalist,—dessicatedly dry or wishy-washily wet. Consequently if I heartily believe in a sensible use of liquor, which I happen to do, I must also believe every red-nosed wastrel a poet, philanthropist, and philosopher. This is my only alternative to believing that any man who takes a drink is a sot. Therefore it happens that though my friends are chiefly moist and Montague, I cry:

"A pox on both your houses!"

But the patronized is not always an abused, pathetic, or tragic figure.

"Once in a while we do finish in style
With the ends of the world to see,"

and when we do, from Cinderella to Dr. Johnson, we get the biggest hand of the whole evening. How are the proud brought low—how are they to be scorned who once sat in the seats of the scornful! There they go off scene, the Cruel Sisters and the noble Lord Chesterfield, and whether they gnash their teeth or affect to look indifferent, we know how they really feel, and laugh with all honest men who applaud to see justice done. But when the boards are empty save for the young girl in glass slippers who comes up stage on the arm of the Prince, or for the old man (for such he seems) with his finally finished lexicon in his hand who shambles forward entirely alone; when the young girl sets out, the violins softly carrying the old theme song,

> "Over the hills and far away
> Beyond their utmost purple rim;"

or the old man returns in silence to his lonely garret—that's another matter. Instead of laughing I begin to fumble head-down for the hat at my feet. And the companion with whom I go to the theatre is just as bad. We laugh at ourselves later, and callously acknowledging that we are both sentimentalists, try to gain remission of sin by such mutual confession. That's afterwards. But till the curtain at last comes down, we can as little speak as we can laugh, and when we don't use such business as looking for things under the seat, we stare straight ahead and hope other people are doing the same thing.

Ah, little Princess, how terribly superior those older

sisters were yesterday by the ashes of the familiar old chimney-place, and how solicitous they are today at your royal departure! Well, Doctor, it was lonely in Sloane Square yesterday, and it will be lonely tomorrow, but the task is finished. *Finis coronat opus.* . . . But, hush, listen to what he is saying:

". . . Seven years, my Lord, have now passed since I waited in your outward rooms, or was repulsed from your door; during which time I have been pushing on my work through difficulties of which it is useless to complain, and have brought it at last to the verge of publication, without one act of assistance, one word of encouragement, or one smile of favor. Such treatment I did not expect, for I never had a Patron before. . . Is not a Patron, my Lord, one who looks with unconcern on a man struggling for life in the water, and when he has reached ground encumbers him with help? The notice which you have been pleased to take of my labors, had it been early, had been kind, but it has been delayed till I am indifferent, and cannot enjoy it; till I am solitary, and cannot impart it; till I am known and do not want it. . . ."

Let those less sensitive to the pathos of such obvious climax sniff if they choose at sentimental happy endings. If it makes my case any better, I can claim equal enjoyment of sentimental *un*happy endings, and as for the reproach of sentimentality—"universal reproach far worse to bear" than that of many crimes and felonies—it comforts me a little to remember how my father once watched Thackeray at a

performance of *La Dame aux Camélias* in Paris, and saw the satirist (as they esteemed him in the age of innocence) take off his spectacles; and solemnly wipe them, and replace them. ("Made my spectacles very dim indeed" are his own words, used somewhere speaking about a similar occasion. And now I recall how My Uncle Toby had once a like experience.)

Well, if it comforts me to think that Thackeray was a sentimentalist, so it cheers me to remember how Johnson was patronized. The man who wrote:

> "What ills the scholar's life assail,
> Toil, envy, want, the patron, and the gaol,"

is a patron saint of the patronized, and even when we cannot emulate his triumphs, they hearten us. Moreover they particularly serve to remind some of us how in a real sense the proud and contemptuous benefactor may help us,—though not just in the manner he intends. Slothful men, only too humble of heart, often find when all else fails, that their independence and purpose are marvelously stiffened by the neglect or condescension of a superior. They should not forget the great benefits they have received at his hands, for he supplies a stinging cantharidic blister, often more beneficial than the poulticing sympathy of a hundred friends.

Of course if the bestower is a frequent offender in these relations, neither is the recipient always faultless. It is ill talking between a full man and a fasting. If the former is over-comfortable and self-satisfied, the latter too is apt to exhibit many un-

pleasant manifestations of unappeased hunger. He is only too often hypersensitive and envious, a sulky, unfed egotist, who forgets that though homicide may on occasion prove justifiable, drawing-room and dinner-table are not the places for it.

To each of us his own experiences. For myself I have found Academic Patronage hardest to bear. This variety, I might explain to the unfamiliar, is apt to be poured *de haut en bas* with an English crispness of enunciation (sometimes its user has spent a whole year at Oxford), and much interjection of *Ahs* and *Urs* and other guttural sounds, which never get high enough in the speaker's mouth to be united with respectable consonants, and which require a better phonetician than myself to reproduce them on paper. (Something like *Ahns* and *Unghs* and *Uhgns* and *Eughs*.)

And on this choppy tide of jolly, hearty, informal English speech is borne the majestic barge of Ultimate Academic Authority. (Solemn Music. The audience will please kneel and recite the *Beatus Vir Qui Timet Auctoritatem*.)

Perhaps you have just been emboldened to express your humble opinion that Shakespeare puts himself into his work, or perhaps you hazarded your equally astute guess that he is on the whole objective. You do this perhaps not that, in the old phrase, you give a damn, but just to make conversation. Well, you make it all right. Something in this manner:

Patronizatus: Somehow I do feel as though maybe after all he (here insert personal view of the Shakespearian method).

Patronus: Ouwghmn! (pronounced in a very prolonged deprecating nasal tone). Ahwh! (less guttural and nasal than the preceding. Intelligibility rapidly approaching the surface). Yiss! (here we are) —of course, you know Boppel and Gumberlitz (some milder vowel noises) rather exploded all *that* sort of thing. Not at all a bad piece of work by the way. (During this speech The Barge already mentioned reaches shore, turns into a combination of armored tank and steam-roller, and, pursuing the wretched Patronizatus, crushes him out of all human semblance. At the same time a celestial choir renders some sacred equivalent of Lilli Lehmann's "Less than the dust beneath thy chariot wheels," in which the victim's remains are expected to join. Curtain falls on grand final pyrotechnic coruscation of anglicized vocables.)

O seeming-qualifying and really-emphasizing "rathers"! O "not half-bads"! O elegant Anglican employment of litotes! (Which, should you be too ignorant to know, is the figure of speech expressing an affirmation by the negation of its contrary. Thus in vulgar American you can call a man a skunk-cabbage by saying he's no geranium.) O Academic Condescension, how painfully have some of us experienced you at the hands of that cult of Vestal Virgins who

jealously guard the holy flame of Pure Scholarship! Who are so superior in the consciousness of their own reputation for scholarly virtue and so suspicious of everyone else's! Why, tell me, do men who study books instead of reading them tend to grow so supercilious and acidulous? . . . *De me fabula!*

The worm does sometimes, if only in spirit, turn beneath the fast-descending, condescending heel. Thus when a gentleman, not necessarily academic in this case, of no such years as would indicate the possibility of a very lengthy, however intense, devotion to wisdom, explains to us in kindly incidental fashion that "there is nothing in mysticism," that he "looked into all that very thoroughly at one time," then we feel like answering: "My esteemed, erudite, and confident Sir, I find you a most consummate and egregious ass. Though your ideas in general be as much more varied and profound than mine as your words are more numerous, and though your humble servant is a small thing and of little account—*yet* he is at least a part of that big cosmos which is infinitely bigger than either of us. In that cosmos many men, whom I consider in comparison with yourself as Mt. Washington to a grasshopper, have believed there is something in mysticism. It is now 12.15. Your endless talk, combined with your pompous patronage, partakes of the nature of cruel and unnatural punishment. Have pity and let me go,"—or words to that effect.

Thus I would speak. But have I ever so spoken or am I ever likely so to speak? Certainly not.

Why? Timidity; good manners; that cursed tongue-tiedness which in company shackles some of us, fluent and bold enough with pen and paper in solitude—all of these wrap me in a contemptible quasi-silence, broken at best by futile protestation which my good-natured patron accepts as awkward acquiescence. As a matter of record the man who a few years ago explained to me the futility of all mysticism, did it after giving me some excellent cocktails and a good dinner. How poor a business to delay my answer until this form now! If this page ever meets his eye—but no, let my apology remain unoffered or be made face to face.

Really one doesn't *wish* to be ill-natured and vindictive. The many faults of some of us mostly happen to lie in just the opposite directions, those of sloth and indifference. Sufficiently annoyed by obnoxiously prolix and self-assured conversationalists we would rather treat them as Uncle Toby (God bless him; he never patronized anybody!) treated the fly: to catch the speaker, carry him to the window, and put him out of it, saying, "Go, there is room enough in the world for you and me." Then we might fall asleep at peace with all. Unfortunately conversationalists cannot be so easily handled as flies. Wherefore perforce we remain stewing in wakeful silence and bad temper.

Why do all clever and well-informed men—no less than many stupid and ignorant ones—talk too much? Though the opinion of all ages remains to the contrary, I think they sin in this regard more than women. *Man: The Informative Sex.* It is a terrible definition, but it is deserved.

One frequent form of patronage is that which vice bestows on virtue.

> "I hate when Vice can bolt her arguments,
> And Virtue has no tongue to check her pride."

It happens constantly. One need not be a puritan to feel sympathy for the silent and generally youthful member of this colloquy, and to desire to assure him that even though the world may belong to the devil, this fact, in spite of much expert supporting testimony, has never been *proved*—that it is not only the forces of darkness which are capable of subtle and effective functioning. If all cities possess hidden sewer systems, they possess aërial stations too.

O Cloacina, mystic and sombre divinity of sewers and stinks, although thine is not by any means that bad eminence which belongs to the highest seat in Hell, yet certainly when all is said, thy votaries constitute one of the most offensive species of the often offensive genus of patronizers!

I find I must leave unnoticed so many interesting examples of my subject: patronage of men for women and of women for men; of professionals for amateurs and vice versa; of South Carolina for Massachusetts and vice versa; of Mr. James Branch Cabell for Mr. George Moore and (presumably) of Mr. Moore for Mr. Cabell; of Mr. George Jean Nathan and Mr. Paul Elmer More in their cordial reciprocal relations. But one must stop somewhere.

Many are the devices employed by patient merit to escape the spurns of the unworthy—the brave man

with a sword, the less bold with something which might be called the prophylaxis of self-criticism. In such a case you simply try to beat the other fellow to it. You put up a sort of self-critical lightning rod. The prudent declare such device useless or even dangerous, but it is usual enough. A happy example of its effective use was when Mr. Shaw in *Fanny's First Play* furnished each of his newspaper critics with a ready-made criticism. How I should like to do the same thing for the present humble volume with the blurbs, favorable and unfavorable, which I am all ready to furnish. Naturally modesty forbids examples of the former, but of the latter let me herewith offer excerpts from a few specimens.

No. 1. *The New Babylon Tempora Book Review:* ". . . of which nine essays all are so alike that if we stop a moment and then resume we cannot tell without consulting the title whether the author is discussing War or Fashion. The reader starts with Tender Realism, which sounds somewhat unnatural, and ends, very naturally with Sleep. The sequence is significant. [A point variously noted by most of my reviews.] Though this reviewer has read but five of the nine papers he is willing to take oath that. . . . Perhaps those who like this sort of thing will call it brilliant, but then brilliance is as easy for contemporary essayists as lying, though readers often find it more meretricious."

No. 2. *The New Ship of State:* "Once reviewers dreaded honest dullness; now they are tempted to fly false brilliance with even faster feet. . . . This little

book, a case in point. . . . Though the very academic author would prove himself light and witty . . . only succeeds in becoming obvious and flippant . . . as heavy in sentiment as without weight in thought. It has been observed that near-beer is bad but near-Mencken is worse. This is near-Mencken with sugar in it . . . perhaps worth noting that just the sort of thing here unsuccessfully attempted has been exquisitely and abundantly achieved by Révir-Namlo in his celebrated contributions to *Gnonlanillor*, of which we fear the present essayist has never heard. A well-intentioned but trivial little book."

No. 3. *The Angelicanus Episcopatus Americanorum:* ". . . so that the reader can in putting it (i.e. this little volume) down only feel regret that one who in certain aspects appears to understand and sympathize with much of . . . feels it necessary to express himself in a manner often so unnecessarily forced and fantastic. Perhaps in a later volume from the same pen grown somewhat more mature we may hope to . . . Of this we feel reasonably assured that no one regrets certain lapses of good taste more than the author himself."

No. 4. *The American Unguentum Hydrargyri:* "A small volume containing nine essays with such titles as. . . . The author rather superfluously explains that his style and thought are borrowed from Mr. Chesterton, but declares himself no Roman Catholic. The question seems sufficiently unimportant. . . . While at times rather amusing, its philosophical profundities and paradoxes are too super-

ficial and sentimental for modern tastes. Not a long-enduring contribution to the wisdom of the ages."

Which is worse, to be completely ignored or to achieve an indifferent kick (or even an indifferent pat) of recognition? Or are either at last of any importance? The years which bring evil things bring good as well, and among these a comparative insensitiveness to others' opinions would seem—it is, of course, debatable—to belong. And thus the patronized like other men grows with age more kindly. Or at any rate more indifferent. In rare instances an individual like Pope can carry for years the memory of a condescending superior as a hidden stiletto, and from time to time take his weapon out, and secretly polish it to an ever-keener edge, delicately testing it on the sensitive finger of his critical perception. But few of us believe we have reason to nurse such enmity. And if we did few of us would be bloodthirsty and resolute enough to stalk our quarry so long. Instead we forgive, or at any rate we pay the world's stale substitute for forgiveness: we grow indifferent and forget. Gradually it hurts less and less to receive the half-heeding grasp of our hostess' hand while she, disregarding us, turns in animation to greet some more important guest. Under our breath we quote:

"Are you Nobody? So am I . . .
How vulgar to be Somebody!"

and scuttle off to our insignificant corner where, in the comfortable security of the ignored, we can good-naturedly sit and watch the scene. After all, we console ourselves, there is probably some truth in what the successful are always telling us of the unsatisfying nature of success. (Not that, to be really honest, we consider ourselves absolute failures of course.)

Now it is just this hour of philosophic resignation when hard-earned experiences entitle us to view the world with something approaching real humility and wisdom, and when our defeated pride establishes a defense reaction by making us sit a little lower than the place we deserve—it is just this hour that an ironic fate chooses for complacent age, represented by ourselves, to meet hungry youth. And feeling virtuous, we grow kindly disposed to youth's awkwardness and innocence and general ineffectiveness. And we proceed to become fatuously patronizing.

Thus is perpetually repeated the eternal story of The Golden Bough. Thus the old priest is slain by the new as he in turn shall some day suffer an identical fate,

> "The priest who slew the slayer
> And shall himself be slain."

GLORY

GLORY

Sound, sound the clarion, fill the fife!
To all the sensual world proclaim,
One crowded hour of glorious life
Is worth an age without a name.

SCOTT.

One hundred years ago when young gentlemen were reading Scott's novels and poetry, and not only reading Byron's poetry but actually modeling their characters and their collars on his—I fear he did much to loosen both,—one hundred years ago those young gentlemen talked about something which their successors today apparently rarely think about and certainly never discuss. It was called Fame or Glory. Many poems, like that above devoted to this thing, preserve a somewhat dubious immortality in anthologies and among literary readers. (And literary readers here means the members of that curious literary cult who would sometimes rather read a Waverley novel than a copy of the *Saturday Evening Post.*) But the thing itself has died. Young men of today, even though they still enjoy the crowded hour of glorious life, apparently never stop to think of its possible relation to an age with or without a name. To them this sentiment of the quatrain is as old-fashioned as the phrasing, and the phrasing is as obsolete as stocks and Blüchers.

It is worth noting that this was not always the

case. It is worth noting that—possibly with one striking exception—our own time is unique in this unconcern for fame. In other civilized ages, men wanted it and said so. How different now! Imagine General Pershing addressing his soldiers before the Argonne as Henry V does his before Agincourt—imagine him confessing to them,

> "But if it be a sin to covet honor
> I am the most offending soul alive."

And if it be objected that this is Shakespeare not Henry talking, then imagine Mr. Laurence Stallings making his General so talk. Imagine Mr. Frost or Mr. E. A. Robinson writing

> "Oh, thus the desire in my bosom for fame
> Bids me live but to hope for posterity's praise."

Those heavy anapests are not further from their technique than the sentiment from their material. Yet those were Byron's words and sentiment, and they were sincere. Doubtless modern singers no less than modern warriors feel no objection to having their fames and names familiar in our mouths, now or later, as household words—but they don't say so.

In contrast to our modest mimouthed moderns what ravening egotisms are offered by the past! Take Milton's case. He called fame

> "That last infirmity of noble mind."

But if he really considered it an infirmity, then it was one with which he suffered from early youth, and for which he attempted little cure. True we should remember the less familiar lines which follow, and which distinguish between this infirmity, "the plant that grows on mortal soil," and the true fame which is pronounced upon in heaven by "all-judging Jove." Yet Milton is too much the classicist—or the pagan we call it today—for us to make out just what the thing really meant to him. Nor indeed is this desire in whatever case, or in whatever age, always a simple matter.

At any rate it may be supposed that the ancients were less complex in this as in other desires. Horace boasts of his work and demands its recognition with the simplicity of a little boy who has built a fort of sand on the sea-shore. And the Renaissance and Shakespeare follow the ancient world and Horace. How splendidly they boast and how confidently!

> "Exegi monumentum aere perennius"

> "Not marble nor the gilded monuments
> Of princes shall outlive this powerful rhyme."

We roll such glorious mouthfuls on our tongues, and refuse to hear the solemn scholar who declares them merely conventional exercises performed by an unusual master on a usual theme.

Whether he finds Milton's own expressions of this kind of egotism filled with unjustifiable pride or with the pious desire to merit his God's approval, I pity the reader who does not find them thrilling. Listen

to this boy of nineteen writing to his friend: "Hear me, my Deodati, and suffer me to speak without blushing in a more lofty strain. Do you ask what I am meditating? By the help of Heaven, an immortality of fame." If a boy had written that three hundred and two years ago and forthwith died before making good his boast, or if after writing it he had lived on to join

> "the common rout
> That wand'ring loose about
> Grow up and perish, as the summer fly;
> Heads without name, no more remembered,"

then the lofty meditation would not move us. Doubtless many such vows have been made and broken. The thrill comes when we know the young prophet is prophesying truth. Thus sometimes the great ones make fate stand and deliver; at others neither prayer nor purpose seem to affect the matter.

> "Fame like a wayward girl will still be coy
> To those who woo her with too slavish knees,
> But makes surrender to some thoughtless boy
> And dotes the more upon a heart at ease!"

It sounds magnificent—this winning of the wayward girl with indifference—but for the life of me I can't at the moment recall any such thoughtless boy. Certainly not Chatterton. Certainly not Keats himself, whose wooing was as assiduous and as noble as that of his master Milton.

It is hard to leave Keats when talking of one of the two great passions in despair of which he died.

Enough to remember that if he wrote his bitter epitaph, he also wrote the proud words:

> "On the shore
> Of the wide world I stand alone and think
> Till love and fame to nothingness do shrink."

Compared with the pride which accompanied the desire of Milton and Keats there appears something morbid in that of such a one as Poe. In one of his letters he confesses how passionately he desires fame, how he would like to have incense burned to his fame in every hamlet. And here again the capricious goddess has complied with an extravagant request in a surprisingly literal fashion. Poe hardly expected the burning of actual incense. (Such had not started in the artistic salons of the 40's.) But the popularity of *The Raven* in school readers and its constant recitation in Main Street parlors furnish a quaint though adequate fulfillment of his demands. Which suggests the contrast of the kind of cash in which glory is paid, compared with the somewhat vague terms in which it is often requested. When Nelson calls for "a peerage or a stone in the abbey," the request is much more definite than the talk of incense in hamlets. Military requisitions are apt to be more specific than literary ones. Statesmen too ask and receive concrete rewards. Men in public life are perhaps the hugest feeders on popular regard; their voracious appetites are too demanding of quantity to let them grow overdainty as to quality. Compared with such the artist's stomach is proud and queasy.

Yet a little reflection is enough to condemn this no less than many other easy generalizations. Anyone who has had the opportunity to watch authentic poets at afternoon teas will recall them often greedily devouring such coarse flattery as you and I should scorn. Perhaps when the great dead return to view their triumphs they are more nice, yet I doubt it.

It is amusing to hear a critic like Mr. Krutch assuring some of us that though in our simplicity we think we are enjoying Poe, we really don't appreciate him at all. It is like the story of the curate in whose church the poor negro woman began shouting: "Praise the Lord, I'm gettin' religion!" "My good woman, you can't do that sort of thing *here*, you know!" Lo, the incense is piled high before the shrine; the adoring votaries push forward to light it, when the critic descends the altar steps in full pontifical regalia. "You mustn't do that here, my good people! Please take your well-meant but utterly undiscriminating enthusiasm elsewhere. Go away, please!" And at one side I see the ghost of a pale slender man in a close-buttoned black frock coat, with insatiable, burning eyes. (Eyes, which like Sterne's, impressed all who saw their possessor.) He knows as well as Mr. Krutch how much or little his worshipers understand him, and like certain divinities, he is wont to mock them. Yet I doubt if he is really exactly pleased to have them shooed away. I think he smiles in proud contempt—and not at the worshipers alone.

Really the poets understand something here which

is hid from the critics, though the latter are such clever fellows. Worship,

> "The worship the heart lifts above
> And the heavens reject not,"

is a phenomenon whose significance does not depend so entirely on its chemical purity as some curates and critics would assume. Take the case of Sue (sometime wife of Jude the Obscure) who used to recite *The Raven* so that her hearers' flesh would creep. Are she and they to be denied their humble worship in the temple of art? Poor Sue, with all the bitter rebuffs which life bestowed on you, I could not find it in my heart to add this comparatively small one, and say: "Enjoy the poem in your childish way, but remember, young woman, this isn't really Poe." Nor do I think the ghost in the frock coat, for all his devilish cold-blooded artistry, would say it either.

Doesn't Shelley somewhere call fame the expression of universal love? Perhaps the great poets of the past saw a worth somewhere in it that smaller visions miss. Rare altruists like George Eliot may pray to join the choir invisible composed of unremembered benefactors of mankind. Thomas à Kempis, sustained by his assurance of a love greater than the love of all men, may voice the anonymity of the Middle Ages in that poignant cry: "For I was nothing and I knew it not," and "Love to be unknown and to be esteemed as nothing." The East too, we are told, has found it less to be and to be loved than not to be at all. And even a fevered thirsty egotist like Pope, to

whom the regard of others was the water of life, could write one haunting line of resignation:

"The world forgetting, by the world forgot"—

almost as haunting as Poe's own

"Forgetting or never regretting its roses,
Its old agitations of myrtles and roses."

Yet, yet when all is said on the other side, have not most men since Pithecanthropus (perhaps it goes back still earlier—witness the egotism of some of our dogs and cats), have not most men dreaded what Sir Thomas Browne pithily terms "the ignominy of oblivion," and until the present, have they not pleaded for its antidote? Well, if this be true why the unconcern of the present generation? Why does it never talk of what so many discussed a century and less ago?

"The harp that once through Tara's halls
The soul of music shed"

now hangs as mute on modern walls (or stands, as an antique, as mute in a corner) as though "glory's thrill" went out of fashion together with the ringletted young ladies who used to sing of it to that once popular instrument. It did. But why? Why do the old words once so thrilling now look so tinselly and tawdry? What are the modern substitutes, if any, for the eternal want which they promised to satisfy?

Imagine the answer to the last question extorted through that modern instrument of torture the questionnaire. Variously expressed by a multitude of such phrases as "Beat the game," "Make a killing," "Go

big in business," "Break into the front page," etc., the modern equivalent of young Byron's desire for fame which bade him

"Live but to hope for posterity's praise,"

would resolve itself into desire for success and, for the most part, for success in business. Temporal success is the modern substitute for eternal glory.

Fame was a reckless rogue in doublet, hose, and rapier. Success is a smart salesman in sack coat, creased trousers, and fountain pen. The advantages of the later style are too numerous to mention, one of the chief being that it affords better opportunities for some men to grow rich. But since I, even though I tried, could never be one of those, I may be forgiven for feeling little personal enthusiasm over that aspect of the change. And ah, how much braver was the earlier style of dress! Moreover if there is any norm of beauty—and no one can prove that there isn't—how much nearer to it did the earlier style, in spite of all its fantastic absurdities, come. Silk hose followed the lines of a man's legs. Creased pants follow Babbitt's idea of fashion. One is a bold, even when cruel, revelation of human fact. The other an often cowardly hiding of it. And always ugly as abnormal things are ugly. These cylindrical curtains, grantedly comfortable and convenient, which, creased or bagging, screen the shrinking nether male, are not normal, any more than our commonplace modern life, even when it is comfortable, convenient, and unescapable, is normal. At a recent pageant in Colonial dress

it was remarked that the women were unwilling to hide their legs and the men to show theirs. The so-called weaker sex showed the stronger argument. The Greeks discovered that the human body was beautiful, and humanity has been for the most part forgetting it ever since. And now the Younger Generation —against whom such terrible accusations are laid and for whom such large claims are advanced—is apparently rediscovering it. Whatever their defects or merits, they are to be thanked for that. Whether their knee skirts and one-piece bathing suits are worn by more or less virtuous beings than wore the crinoline and corsets of their grandmothers I cannot say, nor can anyone else, but I dare affirm that the wearers are healthier and nearer the norm of beauty.

Whatever the style and amount of clothing which they may elect to wear, this generation like all its predecessors is going to find that such is often likely to cover a hungry heart. Even should they decide to wear nothing at all they will discover that this hunger need not for that reason cease. Perhaps the Freudians might say that this appetite which demands fame or success, or whatever may at the moment be the season's delicacy, results (like everything else) from thwarted sex desires, but I can't think it is always so simple as that. Men with thwarted sex may escape it; others with unlimited gratification may retain it unappeased. Whatever its ultimate causation, this at least I should suppose everyone must grant: that rightly to feed this hunger is the goal of all living in this world.

Yes, the goal of all living in this world. But what of the next? Here obviously this vague but perennial instinct for self-satisfaction, self-expression, and self-recognition runs counter to much of traditional Christianity, as in a yet wider degree it contradicts the spirit of Eastern quietism. In the last fifty years the consideration of a future life has practically ceased to motivate thousands to whom it would temperamentally have earlier made the greatest appeal. And they are neither libertines nor indifferentists but what were once called the more spiritually minded. To more and more of such the goal of living is in this world or nowhere. "The center of spiritual gravity has shifted from the future life to the present." Yet—so difficult is the matter's statement—it must be admitted that while in some senses this sort of desire for satisfaction, expression, and recognition of self runs counter to much of traditional Christianity, in other senses it is in striking consonance with much of its teaching. "Make me to be numbered with Thy saints in glory everlasting"—such a prayer may have much in common with the instinct which makes a man seek individual fame and glory, and which passionately repudiates the idea that his individual life is without significance. Thomas à Kempis, voicing the mysticism of the Middle Ages, and Milton voicing the individualism of the Renaissance, vastly different as they were, expressed something which was common to both, and which strikingly contrasts with a later pessimism, convinced of the futility of the individual and bit-

terly rebellious that this should be true, and with a later optimism which, equally convinced of the individual's mediocrity, accepts the fact with utmost complacency.

There exists today a wide-spread social phenomenon which may have some bearing in the matter of the demands which individuals make of life and of the sort of rewards they ask. I refer to a well-recognized malady which is perhaps most significant in the younger generation but is by no means confined to them; which indeed may attack all ages of humans save the very youngest: fine, hearty old gentlemen; up-standing, clean-cut young ones; ladies of the smartest quality; and their most frumpy and least attractive sisters. Anyone consulted learns soon to recognize the premonitory symptoms which usher in confession and supplication for assistance on the part of the secretly suffering victim. After an attack of blushes and stammering, varying in intensity, he or she begins: "I wonder if you would mind helping me with something I've done. . . . I know you know all about these things, of course, and I don't, for instance, understand anything about punctuation and all that sort of thing. . . . *It's strange but I've always wanted to write!*"

Yes, most strange. Strange as life and death, as teething and measles. Statistics would show that eighty per cent of us who are not totally illiterate are suffering, in most cases secretly, with chronic Caco-

ethes Scribendi, that annoying and embarrassing itch to express ourselves. And though there have always been cases since Cadmus, there were never so many as today. It must make us look very absurd in the eyes of professional writers and of such sensible people as are content to find what self-expression they desire in living their lives rather than in writing them. Nevertheless I view the wide-spread scourge, not only with equanimity, but with hope, and this in no cynical anti-social spirit. It seems to me a hopeful thing when people, especially young people, sometimes look for a satisfaction of their hearts' desires in literary rather than business success. Of course it would mean a terrible economic dislocation if all the young women who are now secretaries and all the young men who are bond-salesmen should leave such vocations in order to try and satisfy their hearts' hunger with a problematic literary success. But the danger of that is slight at present, and till it is more imminent, I, for one, am glad to find some modern substitute for fame and glory which nearer approximates what they used to mean than does success either in salesmanship or big business. Such success, as Mr. Sinclair Lewis has proved to the satisfaction of many, however completely achieved by intensive business methods, is apt to remain a mean, drab affair, not fully satisfying either a Babbitt or a Dodsworth. Compared with it that splendid glittering toy of our ancestors is really a more desirable thing.

There is much to be said on the other side, so much

that one wants to say a little of it oneself and so show oneself not totally uncognizant. The scientific and social revolutions, no less than the industrial, have created a world which whether or not entirely safe for democracy, is notably unsafe for supermen. "Fame" and "Glory" were expressions used to imply a popular recognition of public, military, or literary eminence in periods of a less homogeneous social structure. They were particularly emphasized in the period of romanticism and individualism which ended about a hundred years since. In contrast with it our present age is one of realism and commercialism. Since it, like all ages, is ultimately determined in all characteristics, whether social, aesthetic or philosophic, by economic conditions, it would be futile to attempt to bring back the values of the earlier period. Moreover it is questionable whether the personal satisfactions indicated will not be quite as fully, if not far more fully, realizable in the social relations of the future when, etc., etc.

One might imagine something like this coming equally from either Mr. John D. Rockefeller or the New York *Nation:* it all sounds so dull, solemn, true, and totally unconvincing. At least I am unconvinced. When Milton or Nelson or Poe dared make their demands on fate and played for those high stakes, I feel that the stakes were both higher in figure and more valuable in worth than any yet discovered by the New York *Nation* or ever to be discovered by Mr. Rockefeller. When—to take another random example—Aubrey Beardsley burst into tears at

Whistler's unexpected recognition of his genius (and the older man could only repeat: "I mean it! I mean it!") I feel there was something more humanly significant in the event, something that not only thrills us deeper, but actually benefits us more, than any contemplation of successful business or even of successful philanthrophy. If it is objected that in so many instances the path of glory leads but to the grave, it can be answered that all worldly paths lead there, and that most of them are only a little longer though a great deal dustier.

In however small a minority, some of us still prefer generous warmth of individual expression and daring of individual demand—even at the expense of possible extravagance and absurdity—to security and conformity. For the heart, no less than the stomach, is always liable to hunger, as much so under communistic plutocracy as under romantic individualism, but by circumscribing the scope of its demands and making them less aesthetic and emotional and more material and rational, less visionary and more prosaic, we change from individualists to egotists. And instead of frankly demanding fame and glory, we secretly covet notoriety and mention in the newspapers.

FASHION

> Ay, but to die, and go we know not where;
> To lie in cold obstruction and to rot.
>
> *Measure for Measure*

> . . . Malgré le passage des siècles et la suite des révolutions, cette même préoccupation est restée dans le pays. [England] . . . Mais chez les races aux tendances classiques, chez les Français, il en est bien autrement . . . "Mademoiselle," disait La Mousse à la future madame de Grignan, qui soignait trops ses belles mains, "tout cela pourrira."—"Oui, mais tout cela n'est pas pourri," répondait Mlle. de Sévigné, resumant d'un seul mot la philosophie de beaucoup de vies françaises.
>
> J. J. Jusserand.

If the question is again permissible: What do most men live for? The Westminster Catechism declares that the object of man is "to glorify God and enjoy Him forever," but most people would not so reply today. They would more probably say: "For various things, of course, and different men for different things." The question would obviously seem to have so many answers when applied to all men and to be so difficult to ascertain definitely for any one man, that a certain type of mind will turn impatiently away, deeming it futile. To another class, however, and I confess my membership, it appears well worth attempting, even if in a necessarily superficial and unprofessional manner.

Here in America the answer is oftenest that most men live to make money. I am inclined to think it is true so far as it goes, but it does not go far enough. If making money is the immediate object of most Americans, it would seem equally obvious that there are more ulterior objects for which the money is made. Now I believe there is one particular object which is perhaps the most important of all, and which, while often recognized, is not by any means sufficiently recognized. Men, of course, make money for many reasons: first to buy life itself, and then to buy such things as ease, pleasure, and self-cultivation. Some make money to hoard it and enjoy the sense of possession, some to help others. Many to satisfy that inherent instinct for discharging energy through the channels of successful achievement, the fun of playing the game. Finally, men acquire money to purchase power, and thus compel others to do their will, and to purchase position and thus compel others to recognize their importance.

Trite-enough generalizations. I only wish to suggest that most get money in order to buy the regard, esteem, and consideration of their fellow men. They want to become "important"—to be known by as many as possible as "important men." Even in those cases where the money-maker himself is content to remain unnoticed by others, however gratified by his own secret sense of importance, he is apt to desire such importance for his wife and children—and if he does not, they are likely to desire it for themselves.

Now the questions remain: What is the nature of

this desired importance? What the marks by which it can best be recognized? What its ultimate rewards?

And here, I believe, can be drawn the conclusion not always recognized, or at least not sufficiently emphasized, in such discussions. I think the final end of most of the successful money-makers is just to win what is called social position, that is to reach as high an eminence as possible in good society. Now if this generalization is neither false nor over-obvious (with one or the other of which faults so many generalizations suffer) then it becomes worth while to attempt to understand a little better this odd intangible thing which is called social position, often mocked and decried but seldom seriously considered as a universal and compelling social force. For, if we are right, this odd, intangible, at first sight fantastic thing, constitutes the real object for which thousands of hard-headed, practical business men are, consciously or unconsciously, working this hot summer afternoon, with a combined efficiency and fervor such as the world of economics never knew before our time. Though this army is taking its immediate objectives so successfully, perhaps a by-standing observer can mark its final objective better than do its own members. And this final objective is Newport, London or some such city of that god whom however ignorantly they worship and serve.

Let us consider this divinity. It is often explained that medieval society was like a pyramid, wide at the

base and narrowing at the top to a point, the successive layers, representing the different classes, from serfs at the bottom, through free men and the various degrees of the nobility, up to the kings, and so to the Emperor or Pope himself. The cement which held each layer to that above and below it, and so stuck the whole pyramid together, was feudalism. With its disintegration begins the fall of the entire structure. Then starts that series of social earthquakes we call the Renaissance. In 1649 and 1789, the kings themselves fall in England and France respectively from their position at the top. Down topple the great blocks of caste (only yesterday in Russia) and equalitarians shout approval. In certain periods and places there come attempts to rebuild the pyramid in whole or part, but considered in its entirety the movement for the last three centuries seems to have been undeniably downward. There appears to be a law of social gravitation, which works more slowly than the revolutionary earthquakes, but even more inevitably.

What is the condition of the medieval pyramid in our year of grace, 1930? Constantly changing, of course, and different in different parts of the world. Here in America, 1779 and 1864 should theoretically have brought a level where the Middle Ages reared battlement and tower, and though different men will judge differently as to the actual results, a visit to England will convince most that the ruins are better preserved in the older country. It is obvious that the differences in social status in America depend more immediately on the possession of wealth. The same

vat may be used over there, but the product is allowed more time in the wood to grow mellow. Everybody—except perhaps themselves and their toady exploiters—will testify to the often unattractive social qualities of the nouveaux riche. Even when one of the latter is a naturally good fellow, he may, like Silas Lapham, prove an awkward guest at a dinner party, where pure hearts are less than clean hands—speaking, of course, in terms of manners not morals.

It is difficult to avoid being drawn into the perennial discussion of what constitutes a gentleman. To some "the grand old name" stands for the finest flower of a long-developing civilization, to others for a dusty museum piece in an uninteresting collection of anachronisms. The odd fact is, however, worth noting that of the two personal assertions which cause most fights, one asperses the good name of a man's mother and the other his own right to be considered a gentleman. In contrast, "You Son of a Profiteer" and "You're no Christian" would carry little effect as fighting words, though to my own ear the former phrase bears a rather attractive phrasal cadence. Just whether the son of a profiteer is, can, or should be a gentleman offers interesting questions for discussion.

But it is time to ask something about the nature of Fashion, and then about what position it occupies in the social structure of humanity. Certainly nothing is oftener discussed than the Fashionable World. Satirists, authors of novels depicting its charms and mysteries, society editors and society reporters—

all these treat it in their several ways, and yet seldom in the way I should like to see it analyzed, that is in a spirit at once sympathetic and scientific—more sympathetically understanding than the satirists, and far more scientific and less sentimental than the admiring depicters of high life. Take for example the satirists from Thackeray down to the joke makers of the comic papers. Here one meets the implication that this all but universal human hunger is either a morally reprehensible thing or an absurd and trivial one. I am dubious of any man's claims to enjoy the author of the *Snob Papers* more than I do. Yet how could so fine a talent have failed to see that while he was mocking his puppets, he was—often legitimately, I consider—enjoying the very pleasures he satirized. And if it be answered that such self-mockery does at times appear in his personal letters, then my point is that it was largely undeserved or at least undiscriminating. On the other hand the idolizers and idealizers—from Ouida to Mr. Michael Arlen and the movies—sin through a crude vulgarity to a degree that is yet more offensive. When they do not fulfill Thackeray's own definition of snobbery, "the mean admiration of mean things," they are generally at best the trivial admirers of trivial ones.

It is something of a relief to turn to the more realistic attitude of the French. The hero of *Père Goriot* is an ambitious young man who makes use of fashionable society to achieve his ends, and to whom moreover its enjoyment is an end in itself. Eugène de Rastignac feels no sense of its sinful worldliness or

moral emptiness such as haunt Pendennis and his creator. Perhaps to find the genre of English literature which comes nearest expressing the essential charm which belongs to the intercourse of men and women who meet in a more formal and graceful manner than life usually offers, one must go to a type usually regarded as trifling enough, that is *vers de société*. And in which, by the way, Thackeray himself showed such happy facility.

Well, in this attempt to analyze fashion in a way closer to fact than concerns the methods of its profound mockers or admirers, let us as disinterestedly as possible try to note the more obvious characteristics of a group of so-called fashionable people, characteristics which distinguish them from the rest of the world, and which taken altogether mark a person as a member of "good society." By such an observation we can more easily approach an understanding of the thing discussed.

First of all these people are physically clean. Their teeth, hair, hands, and nails are cared for. Their clothing shows like attention. Though not always in accord with absolute canons of aesthetics (if there are such things) it often is. To say it shows attention is a marked understatement; it shows that extreme neatness, crispness, finish, and quality (I suppose the fashion magazines possess the *mot juste* unknown to myself) which is exquisitely satisfying to some of us accustomed to comparatively careless dress. And this clothing is "in fashion," which means, among other things, that it gives the initiated

beholder the same pleasure that a well-groomed soldier gives his inspector. These people have moreover agreeably modulated voices and their grammar is at least not markedly offensive. (Here, as always in my description, I am boldly generalizing. I believe, for instance, that many young fashionables affect a speech just the opposite of that described, but this Sonderregel—probably true in all times—does not offset the larger rule.) The movements of their bodies are easy, graceful, and unrestrained. One enjoys watching such people's movement. (Unless they are particularly fat or gouty—but again: these are generalizations.) These people are in the homely phrase, "house-broken," "they know where to put their feet." To a certain extent they exemplify the old definition of a gentleman as "one who will never unintentionally hurt another's feelings." They do not tread on your toes by accident.

Their ideas present, of course, nothing to equal the vigor and harmony of their bodily movements. Yet these ideas compared with those of any other social group are not conspicuously crude, bizarre, or offensive. What they particularly lack is originality. As to the ethical quality to be observed, even the boldness of my own generalization must here pause, and I refuse to venture any estimate. But there are finally two qualities which are apt to distinguish such a group as we have been observing: first, a sort of social homogeneity, a concern with one another and with a wide acquaintanceship of their class; second, constant employment in what they assume

to be the most important of human aims, social intercourse.

One cannot get far in such generalizing as the above without the sense that it will provoke hearty disagreement from many, especially from those who think the picture is too brightly tinted. Perhaps, and yet I should be glad to say a good word for worldlings, even as the essayist has said a Good Word for Winter. I think it would be equally deserved. For with all those faults which savage satirists and idealistic sob-sisters constantly decry, there is something as refreshing about nice worldlings as a good gallop on hard ground under wintry skies. They neither give nor demand too much (I speak of the best), but just so much of the social contract as they sign, they fulfill. You always know where to find them. What a contrast to the people who want to pry into your affairs and your soul, and insist on saving the latter, or damning it, or denying its existence. Worldlings are more apt to be interested in doing than in defining, but they themselves may be defined as realists though they probably never have heard the word. And even when they are not tender realists, they are graceful ones. Why, on the contrary, must idealists appear so awkward whether on a tennis court or a platform? Why do their egotisms and ankles look equally unattractive when exposed? Why can't they minimize and co-ordinate their movements, physical and moral? Really they might learn much from that unpretentious realist, the decent worldling.

According to the view of Professor Veblen in his

Theory of the Leisure Class what finally differentiates the class considered is the unwillingness to do manual work for utilitarian ends, and their characteristics can all be found in whatever gives proof of such abstention from physical work. Fascinating as this theory becomes in its author's ingenious hands, it seems to me at best only a part of the truth. It is at bottom essentially negative in nature, and men would seem rather actuated by affirmative desire than pride in negative abstention.

Let me confess that I claim no particularly wide observation. I speak as an outsider. Nevertheless I shall let the general picture of the fashionables stand as one which I believe roughly true—one at any rate more like a group of fashionables than like a typical gathering of profiteers, professors, plumbers, or painters of pictures. So much may be allowed my generalizations. And therefore on them I base the chief characteristics of fashion to be that it provides, in however faulty a manner, for five natural human desires: personal distinction; companionship; exclusiveness; play; beauty.

It would be tiresome to examine the relative importance of each of these elements in fashionable society. I think the first named is, as I have suggested, the most significant, but it cannot be considered unaffected by the others. The second, the companionship, is a compelling force, though certain fierce individualists are indifferent to its appeal, as they are indifferent even to that of exclusiveness. The kind of man in question buys himself or his family

this foolish thing because though he despises it, the world considers it of value; and so he accepts for the moment the world's valuation in order to beat it at its own game. Such men care as little for aristocratic as for democratic ideas; they are egocrats. But only few humans are made of such hard stuff.

The demand for exclusiveness runs like an ugly fence of spiked iron around all human institutions. Is it at bottom chiefly pride or fear—fear born of a man's knowledge that he as an individual presents at best so ephemeral a phenomenon? Is it his frenzied desire to join the remnant saved from the abyss of insignificance? It would seem at first sight curiously contradictory that two such opposed forces as the urge toward companionship and that toward exclusiveness should, as they often do, act in unison. Yet when we are tempted to join the satirists in their derision of this aspect of fashion, it is fair to remember that all popular religions no less than science itself are in a sense exclusive, that is, selective. All the more vigorous popular forms of religion have stressed not only the shutting-out nature of sin in this world but also the segregation and punishment of its votaries in the next. It is a poor systematic theology which has not offered both its hell and heaven. Science, too, would in its attitude to the survival of the fittest now seem to preach an equally stern doctrine. The devil takes the hindmost whether in hell, or on the evolutionary battlefield, or in the ranks of the fashionably damned,—takes the hindmost, which is the majority.

However cruel or reprehensible ethically, the

doctrine of fashionable election provides a very cozy paradise for those who live inside it. Owing to that homogeneous nature already mentioned, when two or three of these are gathered together in whatever place or circumstances, they can always find entertainment in talk of commonly known events and acquaintances. This is generally called gossip, but the elaborate proportions it assumes among the widely known and connected is so different from the gossip of humbler folk as to deserve another name. An astute observer once suggested to me the striking fact that members of the so-called upper classes possessed far more widely ramifying personal relations with other individuals than the comparatively circumscribed personal relations of the so-called lower classes. At first sight this might seem an odd contradiction to Emerson's fine saying that the worst thing about the exclusive individual is that he shuts himself out—but at first sight only. What is on second thought more obvious and more important is that here again is a privilege of wealth. It enables a man to buy both knowledge of, and acquaintance with, other men.

Whether or not a deserved privilege, gossip provides for those who can play it a delightful and cozy game—this piecing together like a puzzle-picture the endless story of Society, at once so stimulatingly vast and so comfortably intimate. In the hands of masters the thing becomes something better than most literature, more vivid in colors, more daring in form, closer to the actual life of actual men and women.

For Mr. Clive Bell's definition (or part definition) of a civilized individual as one who cannot be shocked (I should say the coarsest and dullest men I have known were among the least easily shocked) one might substitute the ability to present in conversation the picture of the lives of the speaker's acquaintances and make worth-while comment thereon. Sometimes the contributed fragments of the puzzle-picture are of such high colors that they constitute what we call scandal; oftener the game is innocent enough, and in its duller varieties particularly recommends itself to old gentlemen in clubs and old ladies in—whatever habitat old ladies (if any still survive) congregate today. Meanwhile for a younger generation—or at least for some of them, let us hope—there presents itself a still more fascinating puzzle-picture adapted to conversational piecing together: that yet vaster and more inclusive picture of society (with a small s and including all human beings whether socially damned or saved).

The desire for play, that is for the happy discharge of energy with no utilitarian purpose, and the desire for beauty, that is for color and harmony in life, these, like those other desires for distinction, companionship, and exclusiveness, are things which we recognize everywhere but which—unless we are Behaviorists—we cannot explain. They are elemental like hunger or sex. Yet it is a fact that through them

"the soul takes fire
Face to face with its own desire."

Souls may at the moment be out of fashion, but fire and desire survive everywhere. To many it will seem no less far-fetched to talk of the average person's desire for fashion as *fire* than to talk of souls. To such objectors I would point out the people who are fighting to get into society or, being in, to get in further. Right or wrong, wise or mad, this is a real human passion: witness a not rare type, both male and female, which fights fiercely for this frothy, spuming, fuming cup and drinks with an avid and ill-mannered thirst as compelling as lust itself. Witness how, having drunk, and flown with insolence and wine, they behave like drunken bounders.

Simple natures, or superior and acidulous ones, ask: Why do people so much desire such silly things? Which is like that innocent and stupid question: Why do men make such beasts of themselves with drink? We cannot explain the elemental hunger for play and beauty, but, by reading what William James says of alcohol, we can understand why such hunger seizes the nearest substitute for those things:

"The sway of alcohol over mankind is unquestionably due to its power to stimulate the mystical faculties of human nature, usually crushed to earth by the cold facts and dry criticisms of the sober hour. Sobriety diminishes, discriminates, and says no; drunkenness expands, unites, and says yes. It is in fact the great exciter of the *Yes* function in man. It brings its votary from the chill periphery of things to the radiant core. It makes him for the moment one with truth. Not through mere perversity do men

run after it. To the poor and unlettered it stands in the place of symphony concerts and of literature; and it is a part of the deeper mystery and tragedy of life that whiffs and gleams of something, that we immediately recognize as excellent should be vouchsafed to so many of us only in the fleeting earlier phases of what in its totality is so degrading a poisoning. The drunken consciousness is one bit of the mystic consciousness, and our total opinion of it must find its place in our opinion of that larger whole."

Do the preceding paragraphs exaggerate both the importance of Society in society, and of the evils which it may exert on those exposed to its influence? If you think the effect of Society may not for certain individuals become in its totality a degrading poison, then only look into the next club window and observe the man of promise shrunken into a boresome fainéant. Of course he does not occupy all the chairs but he is probably in one of them. Watch at the bridge-table the once spirited and generous woman, her cheeks raddled, her eyelids puffed and heavy, her throat and arms encrusted with barbarous wealth, and her soul—or whatever you call the modern substitute—as flabby and shriveled as her pitiful body. These are the horrible examples which offset the clean, graceful, attractive specimens which we earlier considered typical of fashion. But for the darkest side of our subject we must turn to bad effects among the young. One need not be a total abstainer from fashion, and a denouncer of all social gradations, to

find it sad that many college boys,—what one should like to think the very pattern of laughing, generous, reckless youth,—must scheme, bully, and truckle for social position in clubs and fraternities with all the callous cruelty and cautious cowardice of mean worldlings thrice their age.

Is there no Y.M.C.A. Secretary or college officer to explain to the young—or at least to the many of them who are still unspoiled—that there is an Open Secret of fashion and—what will surprise many—that it is much like the Open Secret of religion itself? Alas, it is not easy to explain. It is open to all to see but few see it: it may be understood by the simple and yet unexpressible by the wise. If I dared to attempt to state the secret of fashion I should put it somewhat thus: Rightly to enjoy fashion one must forget to be fashionable. Lord Chesterfield had the gist of the matter when he told his son to dress in the morning with the greatest care and then to go out and forget his dress entirely. Not thus do the fanatic votaries who gash themselves and writhe

> "In dismal dance about the furnace blue,"

attempting to win their god's blessing. Not thus those respectable and prosaic citizens who go to dances as regularly and as solemnly as they go to church, supposing that which is gay and thaumaturgic to be heavy and practical. The high-priestesses of fashion may be elderly matrons but its prophets are young poets. Its secret is one with the spontaneous grace of youth.

Fashion, in a word, is the wine of the social organism as now constituted. It was not always so, nor, of course, is it even now so for all men. Humanity's wine was once religion and many passionate hearts affirm it must be again. It has been said that patriotism is the religion of Englishmen. Surely even her foes must admit English patriotism has offered her sons a deep and glorious cup from which to drink. Yet strangely enough men can drink a like draught from cups made in many other lands. And what is yet stranger they can drink a draught with similar powers to warm the heart from the cups of Socialism and Internationalism. Each of these provides for certain men the wine of life.

Now for Americans at the present hour the wine of life, which brings, or promises to bring, the greatest number "from the chill periphery of things to the radiant core" is neither patriotism of which, since the war, they have grown a little ashamed, nor radicalism of which they are, as always, much afraid. The medieval social pyramid is pretty well leveled. With Noble, King, and Emperor, God himself has finally disappeared as a crowning point. In actuality the picture is re-arranged on social values, and the nearest equivalent to God is the King of England, and presentation to his Queen's drawing-room takes the place of eternal salvation.

This will sound to many as flippant or cynical or pessimistic. It need not be so. It is merely a realistic recognition of conditions which have arisen from vast and various causes, chief among which is the inevi-

table result of trying to adjust inherent human hungers to a theory of pure democracy. What of the future? If some form of social reconstruction, designed for the good of man as a whole, arrives, what will it do with fashion? Mr. Oliver Herford once called the Waldorf-Astoria, "an institution for the propagation of exclusiveness among the masses." Perhaps the broader social organization of the future may do well to keep its Waldorf-Astoria or its Ritz. For there will always continue man's perennial and legitimate hunger for the mystical verities of distinction, companionship, exclusiveness, play, and beauty. But how these will be satisfied only the future can show.

WAR

WAR

O it is wickedness to cloth
Yon hideous grinning thing that stalks
Hidden in music, like a queen
That in a garden of glory walks,
Till good men love the thing they loathe.
Art, thou hast many infamies,
But not an infamy like this.
O snap the fife and still the drum,
And show the monster as she is.

RICHARD LE GALLIENNE.

Tom struts a soldier, open, bold, and brave.
Will sneaks a scrivener, an exceeding knave.

POPE.

"What was it *like?*" In 1918 and 1919 that question was often asked by those Americans who did not get over in the Great War, of those who did. For various reasons the question was more seldom put as time went on. Nevertheless there have been certain periods since when interest in the war has been revived, and such a period is with us at the moment this is written. Now surely all sensible people of whatever opinion on war, whether militarists or pacifists or of any intermediate position, ought to welcome full discussion of a subject which for everyone is second in importance to none. Humanity must take all possible testimony, throw out what is false or irrelevant, and then return a verdict in accordance with the facts.

The present writer speaks with such authority as belongs to one serving with the 308th Infantry of the 77th Division. He saw less of the war than many of his countrymen, and, of course, still further less than did many of other nations. Perhaps so brief and limited an experience might, in the opinion of many a German, Frenchman, or Englishman, seem insufficient to warrant giving any testimony at all. Yet he did see something, and in the hopes that it may possess some value, he here recalls a few memories and draws a few conclusions. The reader is warned that the observations are neither sensational nor unusual, and that the conclusions may to him appear equally unimportant.

One reason that I have nothing sensational or unusual to record may be that I do not possess a good eye for the picturesque, and that by temperament and training I incline somewhat to a stoical school (perhaps an adverse critic would say an unimaginative and bourgeois school) which feels an instinctive distrust for the charms of the spectacular. In any case neither observations nor observer were exceptional. Except that my age was somewhat beyond that of most sharing my rank, I was of the same stuff as thousands of other officers in the A.E.F., the kind of stuff that looks so admirable to elderly members of patriotic societies, and so despicable to Mr. Bertrand Russell and the pacifist,—and so commonplace to still others to whom the war has become neither a glory nor a crime, but simply a bore.

Well, to me it wasn't a bore to experience then, nor is it a bore to remember now. Whatever the worth of my experiences to others, they were of intense importance and interest to myself, and continue so to be in retrospect. Indeed when I think of the testimony of those of other nations who were in so long that they became utterly sickened with the whole business (such testimony for example as is borne by Mr. R. H. Mottram in his fine trilogy of war novels)—and yet continued to carry on—then I feel almost ashamed to think how much enjoyment I got out of the war. Looking objectively at myself I wonder whether I, and those like me who managed to do after a fashion what they thought was right to do, and managed to get so much enjoyment out of it at the same time, are merely anachronisms left over from an earlier period, or are merely unimportant representatives of a small and transient culture (that "sporting spirit" which Mr. Samuels so contemns in *You Gentiles*). I can only say that there is something instinctive in me which runs counter to these doubts. Perhaps the really deciding factor was just how long the experience lasted. Nevertheless, I can only give my own testimony as honestly as I can; and that testimony is that more than from any other experience of my life I got from the war enjoyment and satisfaction, from the doing of what seemed right and significant to do, from the opportunity to enjoy the fellowship and love of my comrades, from the interest of the experiences.

Perhaps a good way to present testimony in this matter of war experience, in the attempt to answer

the question what it was *like*, would be to begin by noting some of the things the particular observer did *not* see. I, for one, did not see many things which others (often of far greater experience) have reported. Thus I did not see—or if I saw I do not remember—: a man running on footless stumps, or a body continuing to walk without its head; a sergeant killing his own officer with a hand grenade; any extreme cases of hatred of men toward officers or of cruelty by officers to men; sex abnormalities; atrocities (committed by either side); any sight so loathsome as to make the observer vomit; any case of a man, wounded or unwounded, with his clothes shot off of him; any dying man making an eloquent farewell. The list might be greatly prolonged. It is enough to indicate why I, with my own opinions inevitably colored by my own experiences, am inclined to think that many observations of war are exaggerated by the bias and temperament of the observer, and that war differs from peace not so much in kind as in degree and intensity.

I did see plenty of strange and moving things. I saw and experienced fear a plenty. I saw some cowardice—though on the whole no great amount. I saw mutilation, suffering, and death. Perhaps because I had seen more of the latter than the average man (I had studied medicine) and was older, these did not shock me so much as they shocked some. So far as I know myself I was not made callous. On the contrary I think my sympathies were deepened.

It is difficult—perhaps impossible—in such a case to walk a perfectly straight line which leans neither

to over-humility on one side nor over-confidence on the other. Enough, perhaps too much, of apology. Here then, for what they are worth, are some of one observer's memories—poor things but mine own:

Evenings at the Officers' Club at Calais. Cheerful evenings, the few I had a chance to sample. Before dinner the English of all ranks from Subalterns to Generals looked as solemn as though they were all Generals,—that is as we more volatile Americans count solemnity. After dinner,—well, that was different. Then the alcohol dissolved the solemnity, and everybody apparently enjoyed himself. And there was talk from the men long at the front to which we, about to go in, listened eagerly. One handsome little chap, pretty drunk, repeated over and over, very quietly: "The Gordon Highlanders take no prisoners." Later, outside, an officer calmly told us that they, the English, had done what they could and it was now up to us. Singing,—as we marched down the empty, windy, moonlit streets. Threatened interference from the gendarmes. I forget the details but they were highly enjoyable at the time. And then to complete the evening's entertainment, my Commanding Officer (O " Breck," wisest, kindliest, gayest, and dearest C. O. that ever a lucky Lieutenant knew!) and I watched from the hotel balcony as from an open box our first air-raid.

The sounds of the guns at the yet far-off front. Like the moving of giant casks in some vast, cavern-

ous, subterranean cellar. An ominous, muffled sound, so low it seemed often felt rather than heard. Known oftenest in quiet spring twilights when, the busy cares of the day ended, men had time to wonder a little over this unique adventure; when in those endless twilights, dim and wistful, there came at times that louder sound of church bells. Jangled yet with something of a plaintive sweetness. And manure piles smelt strong, and in little estaminets men sang "Mademoiselle from Armentières," or

> "Good Bye-e, don't sigh-e,
> Wipe the tear, Baby Dear, from your eye-e."

The first shelling. In the early morning the train stopped suddenly, and out we (E. K. and J. F. and I) tumbled, stiff and bleary, to hear that combination of intensely sharp crack and thunderously loud roar, and to watch some couple of hundred yards ahead, that great mushroom of débris and smoke climb lazily upward, and then slowly subside and drift away. Then the same thing, repeated a little nearer to us. No evidence of emotion on the part of the spectators, but it was there.

The final approach to go in and take our position at the front. Riding down a pleasant country road in a lorry as though bound for a picnic, over the road there suddenly appeared a suspended piece of dirty bunting bearing the words "Zone Dangereuse." Just the way "Welcome To Our City" is stretched above a road at home. At the bottom of the hill doughboys walked about in apparent unconcern, and

so, after the manner of men, we showed none ourselves.

I shall not attempt to recall here the first casualties however they stick in one's memory. Millions of men approached death themselves, and saw others approach and suffer it. But unless one has the rare gift, it is futile and somehow indecent to try to describe it. Instead I prefer to recall here such a thing as the intense pleasure of a cigarette and chocolate in the blessed safety of a dug-out (on the Bour de Bourmont) after an entirely futile patrol, when we tried to cut wire, and Very Lights rose glaring in the darkness, and slowly descended toward the small of our backs (so it seemed), and the machine guns began the old put-put-put a little over our heads. The sense of safety and the comfort of those deep-drawn inhalations and the sweet savor of the chocolate are as indescribable as all the rest.

The extreme bodily weariness linked with extreme keenness of mind. (Back after a night of "inspecting the front line" at Village Negre and a report to write.) All taut, jumpy, and light-headed with physical exertion in the places where men whispered and peered into No Man's Land and darkness. The mind somewhat contemptuous, and, though inexorable, not so much cruel as indifferent to the bitter protestations of its "brother ass, the body," as Saint Francis called it. The same sort of thing which anyone may feel after a hard and rather dangerous canoe trip.

The mingled monotony and apprehension of long,

hot days lying in the white chalky earth of a dug-out (near the Vesle of blessed memory). "Long hours of boredom punctuated with moments of horror." The flies and yellow-jackets which swarmed about your food. The stench of unburied men and horses. Whizbangs and casualties. The eternal question: "When will we be relieved?" Light dysentery and heavy responsibility.

The troubled dreams back in the evacuation hospital. In a way these almost worse than the reality which had preceded them. For one carried still that heavy brooding sense of responsibility for men's lives. . . . One must put them where there was less danger. One had apparently put them somehow wrong. Vaguely in troubled dreams one bore the unbearable. . . . Worse than the reality because it could not be as clearly faced. Indescribable—yet scarcely more than all the rest.

And so one might go on indefinitely. "They hate to talk about it," the admiring ladies used to murmur. Here as elsewhere it is hard to generalize for others. Perhaps it was less often the horror of remembering (I, for one, never felt such) than the sense of difficulty in explaining anything beyond the more superficial aspects of those odd days. Anyway, for various reasons, the old "What was it all *like?*" came in time to be less often asked. For one thing, believe it or not, there are limits to even the most insatiable egotist, (in or out of the A.E.F.). We came back, most of us

though not all, and were made much of or neglected as the case might be. (On the whole most of us had no cause for complaint. Some of us got more than we deserved—and I can even think of one spirit, as fine as it was bold, whom that gross indiscriminate notoriety killed.) And now in twelve years the old question has come to be repeatedly superseded by a new and more important one: "What was it all *for?*" The attempt to answer this later question is what rightly animates those war books which are today popular.

Each of us who speaks with whatever there is of authority, great or little, belonging to one who was in the war, ought to try to make some sort of answer. What was it all for? What did it mean? What significance, what lessons, if any, can we draw from it? With an understood repetition of my previous apologies I want to state here my own conclusions. But, right or wrong, I feel much greater confidence in the worth of my conclusions than I do in my observations.

Perhaps, as my observations seemed trivial, so my conclusions will appear unconvincing and indefinite. It is the obvious fault of the Tender Realist that his conclusions often appear unconvincing and indefinite even to himself. These pages have, I hope, made clear enough that whatever good there may be in such a position, and I claim there is much good, it has its corresponding lack of the virtues of that self-assuredness which went with older authorities. After we came back, some of us who had a year earlier been lying through the long hot days in chalky dug-outs,

and hearing the hateful whizbangs come over and watching their effects, found ourselves now standing safe and honored at long banquet tables, talking to many kindly and enthusiastic listeners. That was still the time when men oftener asked what it was all like, than what it was all for. Yet even then some of us were trying to answer the latter question too. We were trying to tell the truth, but (like Colonel Silas Lapham when he tried to explain Gettysburg at the dinner party) the result was not always satisfactory either to speaker or listeners. I remember giving such a talk at a University Commencement in 1919. I now recall nothing I said, but I suppose I tried to show that there was both bad and good in war, and perhaps I gently deprecated the idea that the wrong was all on one side of No Man's Land and the right all on the other. What I want to recall here is how when the speech was over, one of my congratulating friends could not altogether control her natural exasperation: "—but I do wish you could once in your life make up your mind definitely about one thing!" Well, here follow my conclusions about war, and if after twelve years they are still rather inconclusive, I can only say they are the best I can furnish.

What it seems to me that we—some of us at any rate—were trying, however vaguely and haphazardly, to get in the war was Reality. If you scoff: "In what sense can thousands of poor wretches drafted unwillingly, and sent to die in France, be said to have been

STEPHENS COLLEGE
COLUMBIA, MO.

seeking Reality?" I can only answer, "In no sense." Yet some of us, and I believe the number was great enough to have significance, could be thus described.

Whether justified or not, there ran through all that violent welter of purpose and motive in 1917–1918, this hunger for something which can, perhaps, best be called Reality. Slowly nearing the front we felt ourselves approaching what even the least metaphysical among us called The Real Thing. What *is* reality and where is it found? There were never so many answers as in this day of divided authority: Success, Art, God, Science, Work, Sex, Pleasure and so on. Others declare that it does not exist, or that they at least never found it. Anyway, rightly or wrongly, twelve years ago many Americans thought they found the thing in helping America win the war (in the same way of course that many Germans held similar views in regard to Germany). If they could not die in France to further this end, they could at least stop eating sugar at home, or use no gasoline on Sundays, or buy Liberty Bonds, or knit socks. Then those things looked sanctified to many; now to many they look silly. Now any or all of them—from accepting death to refusing sugar—are regarded by many to have been only parts of a great communal hysteria ultimately based on economic greed and fear. Then on screen or stage: "God bless the flag" could always get a hand; now "God damn the flag"—a trifle more adroitly introduced—gets it as invariably.

One difference between the earlier and the later attitude is that that was of affirmation and search, and

this is of negation and escape. That believed it had found a beneficent reality, and this that it is escaping a harmful delusion. The earlier, in the view of the later, was simply mob spirit or herd spirit. That all evil was not confined to the earlier, finds unexpected testimony from such a denouncer of war as Mr. John dos Passos. In *Three Soldiers* he showed us how vile was war in France, in *Manhattan Transfer* how vile is peace in New York.

I think that this swing of the pendulum from what was a communal and emotional spirit has, in certain respects, gone too far—so far that the weights and all the works of the clock are threatened with overturning. The communal and emotional spirit doubtless has bad results, no less obviously than water can drown or fire burn. But its results are not all bad. I claim that some of them are very good. Water can drown you; it can also quench your thirst and make you clean. Fire can burn you to death; and it can cook your food and keep you from freezing. Among such good results of the spirit in question were a generous warmth of feeling and a willingness to sacrifice self for something bigger than self, which I for one value higher as a state of being than the cool and cowardly selfishness of the other. And now my argument—like every other argument sufficiently prolonged—reaches at last the stage where one debater declares "Well, I do," and the other reiterates "Well, I don't." So now I say I do prefer that spirit which if it changes some men into beasts and madmen changes others into saints and heroes, to that

spirit which makes some men cautious and some cowards. And of course my opponent says, "Well, I don't."

The war was a widespread sociological earthquake. Whatever its ultimate causation—whether, as some think, due to the machinations of great dimly-seen individual manipulators of wealth, or whether the inevitable result of uncontrollable nationalist aspirations or economic forces, it came upon many of us who neither desired it nor voluntarily helped to bring it about. There it was, and it seemed to many Americans that the best thing to do was to help America win it. Were we wrong? Perhaps, though I don't think so. At the risk of prosiness it is worth trying to thrash the thing out now, however dusty the process may appear to some. Looking back it seems that once having made up our mind as to what we should do, some of us were inspired by two things. Neither are fashionable today. Both, I submit, possess eternal worth. The first was Adventure, the thing that makes men not only go into dangerous places but enjoy going in. The other was expressed by a word which, once very popular in Commencement Speeches and like exhortations of youth, has now gone out of use in favor of more recent shibboleths like Service, Self-Expression, and Right Living. Yet while Nelson is remembered it cannot be forgotten, and Lee called Duty the most sublime of words. Right or wrong, some of us thought we thus found what I have called Reality.

Well, if we were utterly wrong then and are still

utterly wrong now, that is no fault of the keen critics who have since tried to set us right. Mr. Sassoon (and his is the authority belonging to one who went through the earthquake) has a poem about a boy who committed suicide in the trenches; it ends:

> "You smug-faced crowds with kindling eye
> Who cheer when soldier lads march by,
> Sneak home and pray you'll never know
> The hell where youth and laughter go."

Mr. Mencken (whose voice carries more authority with American youth today than any other) believes the best way to stop war (which, however, I imagine he, with Nietzsche, approves when waged by other than democracies) is to show men photographs of its hideous casualties, and so frighten them into peace. Asking pardon of gentlemen with talents beyond my own, let me observe: What nonsense clever men can talk! Has Mr. Sassoon never detected any old soldiers other than himself among those cheering crowds? They were present if they could get there, and smug-faced or not, their eyes kindled. Has Mr. Mencken never heard a Prohibitionist lecturer try to frighten men away from drink with pictures of the corroded livers of drunkards? If he has he was certainly pleased with the futility of such a method. If finally another critic like Dr. Crile tells me that many men go to war because though afraid of being killed, they are still more afraid of being afraid, I can only express my hearty agreement. But if he goes on to say that he thinks a man ought to fear

death more than the opprobrium of his fellows and of his conscience (an old name for it was dishonor) then I can only answer: "Well, I don't."

An essay which was intended to be a short, and, so far as possible, definite statement of one observer's conclusions, has grown long and perhaps to many inconclusive. I hasten therefore to end it with three chief conclusions or lessons which it seems to me can be drawn from the war.

First: The hatefulness of propaganda. Looking back we now know that all nations were guilty; it would seem unimportant to show one more guilty than another. What a vile thing is this, to teach a man lies in order to make him kill other men! In disagreement with many, I believe that in both war and peace it is sometimes right for one man to kill another, but surely if ever a man ought to know the truth about another it is when he contemplates killing him. There can be true propaganda; I am speaking of the false.

I want to be honest even at the expense of being inconclusive. All the problems of war ought to be considered, soluble or insoluble. When it is argued that it is necessary to employ false propaganda, as it is necessary to employ poison gas, against a foe already using such methods, I feel somewhat stumped. Personally I should be for refusing to use it, and for taking the chance of dying, individual and nation, for decency. Yet I am not so naïve an

idealist as to suppose my attitude would ever become a national policy. Indeed such an insoluble problem—at least so far unsolved—brings me nearest to considering war entirely wrong. To the lying propagandist, German, English, or American, I can only say: Almost thou persuadest me to be a pacifist. If he realized what it meant for me to say that, he would know how I hate him. Poison gas has been defended as a comparatively humane weapon of warfare, and though we who saw men die from it continue to think it a hideous one, yet I say, honestly if I know myself, that I should rather die with poison in my lungs than in my soul. The propagandist poisons our souls with falsehood and hatred. He sows lies in order to reap death.

My second conclusion, to which I made earlier reference, is that war differs from peace in degree rather than in kind. Good things and bad are in both. War intensifies, and it is particularly its intensification of physical injury and death on which the emphasis is oftenest laid, and, it seems to me often falsely laid. People talk as though blood was never shed except on battlefields. Overlooking—if you can—the casualties of automobiles, aëroplanes, mines, and homicides, more blood is shed on operating tables in peace than on battlefields in war. If you say that the former is shed to benefit humanity, I answer the latter can be shed for the same purpose. If terrifying things are usual in war neither are they unusual in peace. No man's life can be made so safe but that he may at any moment be required to face such things, and whether

in peace or war it is his business to try to face the terrifying without terror.

In this connection I run counter to the best critical opinion of the hour which is universally praising Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front.* In spite of its impressive sincerity and earnestness, it contains for me an hysterical quality which largely vitiates its observations and even its implied conclusions. I admit that the author's experience was vastly greater than my own. Where I saw months of war he saw years. Yet from what I did see, no less than from what I have elsewhere seen of life and death, I feel as though the tone of his observations had something *schwärmerisch* and hysterical in them: the hysteria of sentimentality shell-shocked by physical fear and suffering. Surely no one who has not been equally long and continuously through that hell has the right to condemn such a result in another. Yet it must, if it exists, be discounted when this individual testimony is taken toward learning the lesson of war. Only careful taking of testimony from many individuals, that is to say, only scientific securing of facts, can decide whether rats in the trenches killed and ate cats and dogs, whether footless men and headless continued taking steps, and whether other equally unusual things occurred. And when the facts are secured only a proper scale of values can decide their worth in determining the proper attitude to war.

Of course war was horrible. It seems rather surprising that anyone was surprised to find it so. One

thinks of the unquotable old army joke: "Whad 'yuh expect—*Cream Puffs?*" But it would appear as stupid, as scientifically inaccurate, as it is prejudiced, to fail to recognize the good, the immediate, absolute good which was to be observed as well as the bad. We are apt to forget that an individual's state of mind and his resulting actions, however brought into existence, constitute in themselves a reality than which there is nothing more final. However wrong the general state of things, the sociological earthquake, which gave it occasion, I maintain that the actual state of mind of many a man in the war—judged by such simple tests as endurance, courage, and self-sacrifice—was not a bad thing but a good thing. This rare flower of noble action (and I and many men saw it with our own eyes), however foul its soil, was in itself a good thing.

Why did it then, as always, blossom so much more luxuriantly in that rank and bloody soil than in peace? Because of the greater intensity of communal living which was provided, intensifying many (of course not all) toward larger, less selfish ends. And while it sometimes intensified lust, cruelty, and brutality it also sometimes intensified self-sacrifice and prayer—making some who had forgotten remember that prayer may be not only a dull, enforced (or neglected) routine but also a quivering, passionate instinct. For our customary life of peace forgets such intensity found in community of effort. Seeking safe and selfish living as its goal, it forgets that voices, different in so much else, could alike coun-

sel: "Live dangerously" and "Who loses his life shall find it."

And from this follows my final conclusion. What Price Glory in war is a question to be asked and no realism however stark spared in answering it. But another question must likewise be asked and answered: What Price Meanness in peace? What Price Drabness and Commonplace? What Price Overconcern for Safety and Indifference to Honor? Those things too cost something. Their price may be paid in something more precious than blood. To find any scale of values which marks right living not one but both questions must be answered. And to answer properly we must not forget that strange kind of living and dying—strange, yet how usual!—which is called heroic. It is often of an uncouth aspect. "There is somewhat not philosophical in heroism; there is somewhat not holy in it." Today its speech sounds unpleasantly, absurdly, out of place in business office and laboratory, often even at the altar itself. But from one place, the battlefield, it still calls—or has called—as the voice of a lover calls. And youth hearing it laughs and lightly, swiftly runs to follow.

Why should men want to go to war? It is like asking why they want to get drunk or get into good society. They grasp for these unclean cups because from them they can still drink something which today they do not find elsewhere, the wine of life. And thus it happened that many saw a mystic chalice, caked with filth and spurting flame and spilling

blood, pass before them, high above the fields of France, and agonizing strained to drink, and drinking died. For some that was a Reality, a Real Presence.

"Mankind's common instinct of reality . . . has always held the world to be essentially a theatre for heroism. In heroism, we feel, life's supreme mystery is hidden."

We shall not end war, we shall not deserve to end it, until as the wise voice just quoted warned, we find in peace its spiritual equivalent.

SLEEP

SLEEP

To die; to sleep;—
No more; and by a sleep to say we end
The heart-ache and the thousand natural shocks
That flesh is heir to. 'Tis a consummation
Devoutly to be wish'd. To die; to sleep;—
To sleep? etc., etc., etc.

HAMLET.

Immortality. I notice that as soon as writers broach this question they begin to quote. I hate quotations. Tell me what you know.

EMERSON'S JOURNALS.

Two things so good I found
That neither better seems:
Either to sleep quite sound,
Or wake from troubled dreams.

"Now, blessings light on him that first invented this same sleep!" says Sancho Panza. One must avoid the danger of spoiling so good a thing by expatiating on it. Enough then to note the deep human universality it perfectly expresses, and pass on with grateful heart and silent lips. Those endless generalizers the great poets talk more of life and love and death and sleep than of anything else.

For one who claims any validity in the mystical aspect of things, for one who as a tender realist finds the universe bounded by unyielding laws on some sides but not on all, this most usual and most strange of things is no less a comfort philosophically than

physically. Here we are, you and I, cribbed, cabined, and confined by all varieties of matter-of-fact, prosaic, everyday circumstance (make a partial list for yourself of what has been reflected in your thoughts in the last hour), and then by contrast look a little ahead, and see how in some twenty hours at most, these must all drop away from you as his clothing drops from the body of a naked swimmer, and you are to float away in a shoreless and unplumbed sea of mystery. Then, whether you move among dreams, or whether yet farther from all we know in waking hours, you sink to very nescience, you will have traveled so far that any imaginable journey in time or space becomes by comparison as nothing. We try popularly to express the mystery by saying we enter "another world," but it is too difficult for so comparatively simple a metaphor. We enter—what? Something which by its nature is indescribable in terms of waking life.

All of which is to some men nonsense. Plenty of such (often sensible, efficient, and kindly people) see nothing more mysterious in sleep than in golf, sex, business, insanity or anything else. Apart from this difference of attitude, they are like the most of us in appearance and conduct, and are indistinguishable while they play golf, marry, sell bonds, or go crazy. Yet the difference mentioned does constitute one of those eternal watersheds of differentiation which run the whole length of humanity. It is William James' Tender Minded and Tough Minded.

Of course it is often hard to say in which group any

particular individual belongs. A freethinker may be either, and, what is less often considered, so may a most sincere "believer." For such a sincere believer in the creed which has brought tenderness and mysticism into popular thought may (perhaps unknown to himself) be an individual with very limited emotions and no imagination at all. Such a one vehemently declares his orthodoxy. But what I mean is not a question of intellectual affirmation but of emotional apperception and of poetic sympathy. To such a one the change from waking to sleep appears in no sense mysterious. And the change from life to death no more so. To the words "Behold I show you a mystery" he gives his hearty agreement. But whether we shall not sleep or whether we shall would really be equally unmysterious to him. If you cannot make a blind man see an object, then St. Paul himself cannot show a mystery to one with no sense of the mysterious.

The sort of person I mean will tell you, with perfect honesty, that he believes that passing into the next world would be as natural to him as passing through a door into the next room. He claims in these matters the faith of a little child.

What do those words "except you be as a little child" mean? (I wonder if more thought-provoking words were ever spoken!) Though the trusting nature and the innocence of a little child were apparently intended, it would seem that together with these was implied that imaginative and fanciful quality of childhood with which the practical and

rational adult usually contrasts so strikingly. Children find it easy to believe what they are told because their world is not close-knit and chockablock and of a piece. It is possible to persuade a little child that the next room contains either fairies or a Christmas tree because it can imagine a universe not everywhere like the room in which it is now. The attitude of the unimaginative but convinced believer seems to me a totally different thing, and the often-employed phrase "faith of a little child" most inapplicable.

I should not care—I should not dare—to deny any particular individual the quality I mean, which may, for all I know, be in him hidden to myself, but certainly many, believers and non-believers alike, seem, often even claim, to find all the universe an equally one-piece affair; and the material which they choose is, to say the least, coarse, cheap fabric. Probably no age of man has so vulgarized the gate of death and what lies beyond as our own. Vulgarity has in a true sense sought new worlds to conquer. Primitive folk, such as the medieval peasant, could see heaven naïvely, yet beautifully and mysteriously, somewhat in terms of their own lives, but the modern spiritualist—

Imagine dying in complete consciousness (which as a matter of fact very few do) and wondering with all possible intensity of wonder what was coming next. Then imagine shooting through The Gate—into The Other World—and finding it *just like this one.* It would be as though in some indescribably thrilling

dream of supreme adventure you took a leap from an immeasurable height—and landed wide awake safe in your own bed, confronted by some petty, harassing problem which sleep had for a time washed clean from your brain. Imagine the Reception Committee, with real badges, meeting you just as they used to meet arrivals from trains on earth. One thing I know: that I should in such a case be convinced that I had been wrong when, on earth, I doubted Hell, and that—however the Committee tried to convince me to the contrary—I should realize that I was from now on to be damned eternally in it. One hope only might remain, that as Heaven was in all other respects the counterpart of earth, it might be possible for me to commit suicide there, and so leave it and the rest of so hateful a universe behind forever.

Stevenson declared that if ever he got to Hell he knew he would find it windy. What for me constitutes the most hateful part of this world would incline me rather to expect to find Hell dusty. For me dust symbolizes the commonplace, and the commonplace is the worst of life—not, of course, the most agonizing or most wicked or most tragic, but the worst in the sense of being most unlike what I find the best and most real. If it is proper to say "in heroism we feel life's supreme mystery is hidden," then in the commonplace we feel life's supreme mystery entirely vanished. Need I emphasize that I do not here use commonplace as a synonym of usual? Need I repeat

that I think the usual things are often the strangest? Yet, save for a blessed minority—and even they bitterly complain of its presence—for most of us, the commonplace, the trivial, the mean, the boring, by whatever name you call it, is usual enough: "Das Gemeine was uns alle bändigt." Hundreds of voices, great and small, have used the symbol indicated. Musing a little on its use the symbolic and physical significances of the word become almost one.

"And each day brings its petty dust
Our soon-choked souls to fill,
And we forget because we must
And not because we will."

"Golden boys and girls all must
Like chimney sweepers come to dust."

Even the least fanciful might admit that many a golden boy and girl disintegrates into dust long before death.

Dust, physical dust, is matter of all kinds disintegrated into minute, dry, imponderable particles, the aggregate of which becomes a neutral, odorless, tasteless, impalpable, colorless, sometimes invisible, substance, capable in sufficient quantities of blinding, choking, and even killing man. This applied to life becomes one of those few perfect symbols which, like "the water of life," are apparent to everyone, but which also, however far pursued, continue to show in the physical basis of the metaphor an exact reflection of the thing symbolized. Physical dust more than any other material substance seems farthest removed

from form and vitality. And so with the commonplace. Sin is often conceived in terms of mud or filth, but even these are capable of receiving shape and in them seeds can grow. The usual might be compared to earth. It, like anything else, can become dust, but it is not dust when we dig and plant or travel and build in and upon its blessed solidity. (That the Bible often calls it "the dust" should not confuse us. God, or whatever it was that made man, doubtless used earthy and usual materials out of which to fashion him, but whether this process took place in the Hebraic Eden or on some more remote evolutionary stage, I am sure dust and commonplace were *not* used. For dust of its nature cannot grow vital, and the commonplace never came into existence till man himself created it.) Biologically speaking dust is the final negation of matter, and the commonplace—but my fancies, full of form and vitality for myself, may become to you, my Reader, something very different. Even the thoughts of the great by the attrition of much use may disintegrate into just the thing we have been considering, and the thoughts of the less great do the same, only much faster. A platitude is merely a truth ground into fine powder.

So many of us who would desire to fight for the cause of affirmation unknowingly betray it. So many, on the other hand,—like Goethe's Mephistopheles and Mr. Dreiser for example—who declare themselves believers in negation are unsuspecting traitors to that cause. Can anyone suspect that most

delightfully vital of literary creations, who jests, drinks, sings, and dares argue with God himself, really to be the incarnation of eternal negation? If anyone can, then, but only then, can he also think the man who patiently follows Clyde Griffiths for 840 pages, carefully wiping up all his pitiful deeds and words after him (and this without any stimulus of love or hatred), exemplifies a negative spirit. There is but one mark of the negative spirit in its purity and it can be observed in any insane asylum: the unwillingness to eat, talk, or continue any personal relations with others.

Men differ infinitely in the amount in which the commonplace enters their lives. All know it sometimes, but none who continues to live knows it always. For there are solvents, there are solvents to cleanse us of this hateful thing so that we are not left always to perish in the dust. Some of these are genuine and some meretricious, some are good for some men and bad for others, but in all of them at some time some men find unspeakable relief from this cursed blinding choking thing, and are for a time washed clean of it. One muses wonderingly over the multitude and variety of such solvents, humor, war, sex, poetry, alcohol, ambition, fashion, art: these are but a few of them. Men quarrel fiercely whether this or that is proper to employ or is best to employ. There is that perennial quarrel, for example, whether the romantic or the realistic spirit is better to get rid

of the impertinent and unessential substance which hides the real substance beneath. Perennially interesting yet perennially futile. If a vacuum cleaner best serves your need why find fault with another who prefers opening doors and windows to the west wind —or vice versa?

And of all solvents, of all escapes, none is more close to hand, more frequent, more universal and more blessed than sleep, in whose authentic mystery some third part of the most seemingly prosaic life is lived.

I fancy sleep as a shoreless sea down to whose edge we come through twilight—sometimes vainly seeking through the dusty flint-strewn fields of insomnia—and where we lie down to wait the rising tide. Then, then it rises, and we are borne away where neither friend nor enemy can follow—"out of space, out of time." Is it not strange that we can love such diverse things as life and life's abeyance?

I fancy dreams as possessing the first-reached upper depths of this plumbless sea. Once accepted by primitive man as a part of reality, then made the symbol of all unreality, now once more science tells us that in them we are one with that subconscious self which is more real than this small unsubmerged consciousness, shining in men's sight like the small visible portion of an iceberg. I am no scientist, but it would seem plausible.

And in the deeper depths? What happens there?

Some say that there even, this curious Promethean fire still glows smouldering along the frontal lobes, though I myself should imagine it for a time quenched utterly. Yet whether it does or does not die in those places (or whether something happens equally undescribable by "*does*" or "*does not*") all this time the lungs continue to break down the CO_2 of the blood and send oxygen to the frontal lobes and all tissues requiring it. "O God, that makest us to breathe in our sleep!" cries Epictetus. I think I understand somewhat the sense of wonder which brought forth that cry.

Have you ever tried to watch what happens as you fall asleep? For myself—so far as this clumsy pen can follow—it is as though those unyielding walls of fact and circumstance which imprison us for so much of that other two-thirds of life, begin now to melt and relent in the vast and all-engulfing tide. Things which reason holds forever irrelevant and alien may now draw near together in the most whimsical relation—Coalescence—Dissolving—Solution. The law of gravity is suspended in this buoyant medium, and as with that other solvent, humor, incongruous things unite in deeper congruities. And so watching the very rock of so-called reality float and dissolve, we too float and dissolve away. . . . But where I can remember and describe a little, others, many others, can go farther, Ole Luk Oi and Alice and Shelley and Mr. Cabell (who whether or no a true sophisticate is a true painter of dreams), many such envied seers walk through the Ivory Gate and tell

us what they see. Yet what I can do is something still more wonderful than describing. I, like every other human (for after all even the Tough Minded must fall asleep and dream) I can experience the thing itself. And I re-echo Sancho Panza.

Literally, not fancifully, speaking, the toughest mind fades far away, dissolves, and quite forgets once in every twenty-four hours. Practically, not poetically, speaking, the most efficient efficiency agent is for about a third of his time such stuff as dreams are made on, and the whole of his little life is rounded with a sleep. "Upwards of five hundred thousand two-legged animals without feathers lie round us in horizontal positions, their heads all in night caps, and full of foolishest dreams." Though the number be changed to more than half a million and the night caps gone, the two-legged animals without feathers and their dreams remain authentic, immediate phenomena of this night in which I am writing no less than of Carlyle's day or Plato's. The dour Scot, with dyspepsia in his stomach and waefulness in his heart, who wrote those words, he no less than Mr. Cabell was a seer of visions and painter of dreams, but he thought them the deeper reality while the other merely chooses them as the better part of a scheme of things which is all unreal.

There is, I believe, one thing which intelligent critics dread even worse than armchair psychology, and that is the familiar type of whimsical essay which

starts anywhere and ends nowhere. To avoid so much as possible the latter reproach, let me plead that, however vaguely and inconclusively, yet honestly too, I have been trying to express something which seems to me truth or at least a part of truth. To us who thus see it, there is something abnormal and unnatural in those dwellers on the other side of the already mentioned watershed, to whom all this is foolishness and to whom "foolishness" is the chief folly of man; to whom, in a word, reality is to be measured only by the immediacy of its relation to physical phenomena. Perhaps they are at closer grips with it, reality, than we. Neither can prove the other wrong. I am only exercising a part of Dr. Johnson's definition of liberty, that every man has a right to express his opinion. If they exercise their right to the other part, and kick me in my foolishness for my pains, I do not complain. If I appear not mystical, but muddy and muddleheaded—well, that's one view of it.—And yet——

In the *Letters* of William James appears his answer to the question: "Do you pray and if so why?" This James answered: "I can't possibly pray—I feel foolish and artificial." This makes very interesting testimony coming from the man who, more than any other of whom I know, brought back to many suffering under the tyranny of the Neo-Darwinian dynasty the assurance that all worth of religion need not disappear with the passing of an older supernaturalism, and who elsewhere writes so understandingly of prayer. Now it may be that just

this self-conscious sense of artificiality, of "foolishness," is what restrains many—not all of course—of those who are dubious about attempting to come to closer grips with the cosmos through more emotional and mystical avenues of approach. It was earlier suggested that the effect of the greater intensity and danger of living provided by war might be significant in the matter of prayer. Many will deride the notion that anything of so ignoble a nature as fear can ever lead us wisely. I do not agree. Fear is often involuntary no less than physical pain, but it, like pain, may serve as a warning, and may thus enable us to obtain a more proper, a closer and more vital relationship to the rest of the universe. And I believe that such livelier sense of cosmic relationship (if that pedantic phrase be allowed to express my meaning), such being raised from the dust, is, however brought about, a good thing—one of those states of mind which constitute as final and as absolute a good as we can know. Lacking it, many today, successful enough in the world's eyes, confess themselves spiritually sick.

For we must keep in mind that vast as were the effects of the earthquake of the late war, the effects of still another earthquake—such rather than a revolution it was—in the minds of men are yet vaster.

"And it was Darwin, the gentle, the kindly, the human, who could not bear the sight of blood, who raged against the cruelty of vivisection and slavery, who detested suffering in men or animals, it was Darwin who at least typified the rigorous logic that wrecked the universe for me and for millions of

others." That is Mr. Gamaliel Bradford, and his is testimony neither unusual nor hysterical.

If the universe has been wrecked for millions—and it has been—we cannot let a sense of foolishness, nor a sense of propriety or of humor, stop our turning to anything which can keep it unwrecked for ourselves and millions of others. That were indeed the supreme foolishness. One need not be a gospel shark, or hold any brief for the Elmer Gantrys who rush in where angels fear to tread, to feel a perhaps justifiable contempt for many today who are too self-conscious, or too spiritually timid, or too completely held in check by good taste and propriety, to dare assert what is by temperament their natural birthright had they courage to grasp it. This does not apply to the Jameses or Bradfords or to any to whom the shock of dislocated belief came earlier, nor does it apply to any who are today really temperamentally unconcerned. It does apply to all who are capable of finding prayer helpful,—which means the majority of human beings,—and who neglect its help. The cynic sees many men pray and rise cheerfully from their knees to scorn, cheat, or kill their fellow men. But if he looks, and has eyes to see, he will also observe many rise with greater charity and greater purpose in life, with a wider and more imaginative vision of the universe. "Who rises from his knees a better man," says Meredith, "his prayer is answered." To think that this process which has historically always helped men, and which psychologically is as demonstrable as the cardiac stimulation of digitalis, must cease because

men do not believe in primitive myths or miracles, is simply to fail to understand human nature and the will to live, which so far at least has never died in healthy men. The thing is pragmatic. If war is not experimentally available—or you consider it an improper method anyway—try a bad automobile accident or a fire in a moving-picture house. Then the benefit to be derived from

> "The soul's sincere desire,
> Utter'd or unexpress'd"

may possibly be proved. *May* be—for if you have through timidity or self-consciousness (that ever-present Doppelgänger of artistic temperaments) refrained long enough in security, it can happen that likewise in danger and death this natural process will not function. In that hour the commonplace will be washed away, but the solvent will be terror.

For most adults the problem of life is salvaging what is worth while from the wreck. To prove that this is not necessarily a tragic figure think only of the delightful account of Robinson Crusoe taking the stores from the wrecked ship. Now, though aesthetic and commercial values flourish today, so-called moral values are in many higher intellectual circles largely démodé. To paraphrase the Hibernicism, one moral value is as bad as another and worse too. Yet if the Robinson Crusoe analogy be allowed, here we are with the chance to choose what to take away, and the time

in which to do it limited by the soon coming in of the tide. Shall it be gold or food and firearms? We have to choose—if we want to live—and choice implies evaluation. The Puritans believed that every act, however seemingly commonplace and trivial, partook either of the nature of grace or of sin. So exact and detailed a pattern of life looks to us foolish enough, but the point is that the confused blending of a thousand patterns in the life of many men today looks just as foolish. That quality of *inevitability* which is recognized as the final criterion of good writing is so painfully lacking in the lives of many who, capable of doing a number of things, are incapable of deciding that any one of them is more worth while than another, or that the sum of all of them is worth while at all.

Well, it may be answered, granted that more of what you call values or inevitability, might improve life, how can one obtain such if one actually fails to see them? Do you advocate the use of synthetic inevitability, so to speak?

Something like that. "All theory is against the freedom of the will; all experience for it." Mine is at any rate, and therefore I think I have the power to exercise my will and to choose. I do just that. I "call my shots"; I declare my values; I arbitrarily choose a pattern as inevitable; I select clothing and firearms and leave the other stuff behind in the wreck. In so doing I become for myself an authority, and find sanctions, which I am glad to have in many cases endorsed by older authorities.

Could I accept, not only many of its sanctions, but the authority of the church *in toto*, I believe I, being naturally tender-minded, might gain greatly in efficiency and happiness, but to do so would be to discredit my realist experience in such a way that it is unthinkable. I look back and see the church still providing efficiency and happiness to thousands for whom it is proper. For myself I am content. My attitude is reverent, but it is not wistful. After all it was not I who wrecked the ship of orthodox supernaturalism any more than I who brought on the earthquake of war.

"We have said to the dream that caressed and the dread that smote us,
Good Night and Good Bye."

At least we have said farewell to the dread, but something of the dream remains. To which the orthodox will scornfully reply that it is unfair to try to keep one without the other—that it is impossible. But it is of the essential nature of dreams that they can be enjoyed independently of others' sanctions. I should put the case of the tender or romantic realist somewhat in this way: It is as though we all played a fantastic game according to whose rules, Something—It—might at any unexpected moment appear to catch us, and that to win we must at that moment before Its hand actually touches us be able to reply to The Question with the right word—a single word without any other word or words to qualify it. Just one word, but on it depends everything for the person

caught and perhaps for others too. Many are caught and say nothing: some unable to decide on what the word should be, some too weary and uninterested to speak. As I understand the rules of the game, many are disqualified for attempting a qualified generalization, for, as I said, just a single word is allowed. The men who play the game boldest and best answer either *Bad* or *Good* when caught; and I think those who answer *Good* win.

Perhaps I am mistaken and they lose. Or perhaps the game is one of those silly ones where nobody wins or loses, and the question has no answer. Perhaps everybody loses. Anyhow my dream to which I refuse to say farewell is that the universe is (I should like here to qualify with "probably" or "on the whole" or "as I chiefly find it" but that is forbidden) *good*. That is a man's Last Will and Testament. That is The Final Generalization. That is "Faith" too I suppose; though it is faith which, compounding no more with magic than with materialism, is mystical.

Notice that that evaluation of everything differs from evaluating any one thing. A man or a toothache can be compared respectively with other men or toothaches, but a universe is unique. My logic may be faulty, but this seems to be a reason for making us kindly and generous in our estimate. *Bad* is undoubtedly the answer which should be given if the answerer is certain it is the right one, but short of absolute assurance the other is right, even when it is spoken with confusion, doubt, and temporary dis-

belief. On such occasions it is the correct thing to say, something in the way that a weary and wounded soldier must repeat a command the sense of which he no longer understands. Perhaps he has got his, and perhaps the Captain who gave him the command has gone before him, and he is, so far as he can see, alone with no one to hear him. Perhaps that damnable dust is so thick on his lips he can scarcely speak at all. Still if he repeats the command and tries to obey it, then, as I understand the game, he wins.

Well, in some quarters that sort of thing is labeled Romantic Optimism (or even Phantasy of Romantic Optimism) and is to the Greeks (like Mr. Irving Babbitt) foolishness, as well as to the pessimists (like Mr. Krutch) or to the more strictly orthodox realists (like Mr. Mencken).

One trouble is that the contemners and contemptuous patronizers of the romantic spirit do not always remember that there are various varieties, all authentic for the experiencer, but of varying significance. There is what its mockers would call The Tinkle-Tinkle type, such as an elderly gentleman may enjoy, reading his paper in morning sunshine and hearing his granddaughter aged nine playing (and pretty badly at that) "The Blue Alsatian Mountains" on the piano. There is The Crepuscular, earlier mentioned, which comes at blind man's holiday, *entre le loup et le chien*, when children play games in city streets or between box hedges among the graveled walks of old gardens, and familiar things look strange and exquisitely fearful to them. And young people walk

with beauty and desire, and older ones with kindly ghosts, and moths and fancies begin to flit in the way that Sir James Barrie and Mr. Morley know how to call them forth. Or there are The Moonlight brands, the most popular of all, and despised by some for that reason:

> "Lady, by yonder blessed moon I swear
> That tips with silver all"—

"*Tripe! Take it away!*" The words must not be imagined as mine. They are yelled by some discriminating critic of an adverse school.

But there are many other kinds, some of which I should think even such a critic might admit to be authentic and significant human experience. Among them is that romance which needs no moon nor shadows, but may come even in noonday sun, terrible as an army with banners, either in solitude or attended with dust and trampling of men's feet and shouts and curses. When pitiful weak human flesh and spirit recoil shuddering from the Inevitable, and when none the less men can run as on the wind to meet it, with a great joy and sanction in their hearts.

Perhaps the adverse critic still yells "Tripe," or perhaps he says: "That's not Romance. Cutting out the 'running on the wind' stuff, the sort of thing you apparently mean is Realism." Well, I call it by the other name, and yet names are comparatively unimportant compared with what they stand for. At least for most of us who, however humble, yet

are bold enough to desire the nameless something beneath the name.

Few hours are better than that next to the last one which follows a long day crowded with accomplishment and, what is no less wearying, failure to accomplish. Whatever things you have said and done, or left unsaid and undone, are now already become a part of the past as irrevocable, and it seems almost as distant, as the deeds of the Pharaohs. You look back rather blankly while regret and satisfaction equally fade and merge into relief and rest. Perhaps many present earlier have departed, and you and a few are comfortably left to talk or be silent as familiars may. Perhaps you sit in the dark of a summer night, with the chirp of crickets, faces hidden, and the only light the glow of smokers. Or it may be that outside there is deep snow, and all, closer gathered about the fire, stare into it.

However tired you shirk bed for a time. Yet

"You lack the season of all natures, sleep,"

and others doubtless lack it too. And so this hour, like those before it, comes to its end, and the next, the last of all, proves no less good.

Off come your clothes, now grown tiring and impertinent encumbrances. And next personality itself. Even now though you are so sleepy, apposite quotations and analogies still tease you—how all day long you have worn it, good on the whole, though it was not

such as you should have chosen for yourself—though it was, God knows, often ill-fitting and uncomfortable. But this is as little the time for thought as it is for labor. Enough that for the day this mortal coil was good to wear. Now it is good to shuffle off.

Perhaps at the last Sancho Panza's phrase runs dimly through your head. But with everything else it changes in the odd, familiar, indescribable way, while swiftly and thankfully you pass through the gate, and down to the sea, and so at last away: Now blessed be He who creates such good and usual things, waking and sleep and life and death.

STEPHENS COLLEGE
COLUMBIA, MO.

PS 3525 .I484 T4 1930

Miles, L. Wardlaw 1873-

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